



Daily Magic

SPELLS AND
RITUALS FOR
MAKING THE WHOLE
YEAR MAGICAL

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Dedication

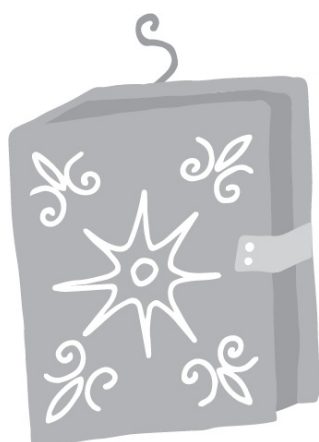


*For Carole Veronica Brigid Murray,
beloved friend and junko partner, gone too soon.
November 2, 1949–January 9, 2018*

Epigraph

“Make use of time, let not advantage slip.”

—William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*



Contents

Cover

Title Page

Dedication

Epigraph

Introduction

365 Days of Magic

A Perpetual Calendar of Spells, Rituals, and Feasts

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November December

Acknowledgments

Appendix 1: Living by the Days

Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts

A Glossary of Terms

Bibliography

About the Author

Copyright

About the Publisher

Introduction

TIME IS EPHEMERAL. You cannot touch it, smell it, or taste it. Time is observed through its inexorable passage, through its familiar rhythms, and especially through the changes it brings. Time is all powerful. Time is ever present. Time does not stop or stand still, although, in moments of extreme pleasure or trauma, it may certainly feel as if it does. It is a crucial component of every magic spell, every act of divination, every spiritual ritual. Time cannot be commanded, but if we can recognize and work with its rhythms—if, to paraphrase that old saying, we are in the right place at the right time doing the right things—then our lives can be immeasurably enriched.

Every moment may be a magic moment, but not every moment is identical. Each day of the year is a portal of power, but it's not always the same power. The days that are most special to me may not be the most special to you, and vice versa. That said, certain dates of the calendar year bear tremendous significance to masses of people. Some events cannot easily be rescheduled. Look at all the trouble, expense, and effort millions of people go through each year to arrive at a pilgrimage point on the right date. The entire concept of Black Friday holiday shopping rests on the premise that gifts *must* be given at a certain time. Entire economies rely on these expectations.

Let me give you two personal examples:

For several years in the early 1990s, I worked as a tarot card reader for a telephone psychic hotline. Without fail, February 15 was an exceptionally busy day with the phone ringing off the hook. Why? Because it was the day after Valentine's Day, a day when marriage proposals are anticipated. When these proposals were not forthcoming, many felt compelled to call someone to help them reassess their relationships.

Why the big deal, you ask? What difference does the date make in terms of a proposal? Yet clearly, for many it does matter, and these reasons may be hard-wired. Valentine's Day is no easily dismissed "Hallmark holiday." Its date and

those immediately surrounding it have been concerned with matters of romantic partnerships, marriage, and fertility for thousands of years, long before the emergence of greeting cards or Saint Valentine.

Likewise, when in 2012, Hurricane Sandy battered the east coast of the US at the tail end of October, many communities were obliged for safety reasons to cancel Halloween (or at least its public aspects). In many communities, like my own, the holiday was postponed and trick-or-treating rescheduled for a week or two later. Although most didn't bother, I did witness some sad children and parents trying to make the best of it but to little avail. Although an opportunity had been given to wear costumes and receive candy, it just wasn't the same. The magic—the Halloween feeling!—very palpably wasn't there.

Objects in the Mirror May Be Closer Than They Appear

That warning on automobile sideview mirrors applies metaphorically to the calendar, too. Speaking for myself (but I suspect also for many others), time is always running away with me. For example, I may know I have an obligation scheduled for a specific date—I haven't forgotten it—however, I often think the date is farther away than it really is. Likewise, I intend in all good faith to mail birthday cards or create elaborate altars or cook special dishes for a specific holy day, but when I look at the calendar, I realize that I've left myself very little time or, worse, that the day has come and gone.

We all have busy schedules. Our days are packed with obligations, responsibilities, and worries. How many times have we glanced at social media, only to discover that it is a beloved saint's feast or the festival of a goddess, and we are woefully unprepared? Alternatively, we discover that it is the perfect day for a sorely needed magic spell, but because we didn't know until the last minute, we lack the supplies, and so an opportunity is lost. Too often we realize too late that we are missing wonderful opportunities for spellcasting and celebrations. This has only worsened with the advent of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic and the effects of social distancing and quarantine: more than ever, so many of us—myself included—feel as if we have become totally untethered from time.

The year is filled with magical dates, if only we know when and how to celebrate them. Rather than feeling oppressed by time, let's savor it, and maximize the blessings and opportunities afforded by these days of power. In similar fashion to Earth's renowned power places, these dates are power moments. Our lives can be improved, and we can take better control of our

destinies, if we are aware of these dates and possess sufficient advance notice and guidance to create rituals and cast spells that tap into their inherent power, essentially riding the currents of time. Each day is an increment of power. You can tune into it and ride it, in the manner of surfers catching waves.

Originally, I began compiling and organizing the material in this book for my own personal use. I found that arranging spells and rituals in a calendar format made me more likely to keep track and actually perform them. Astrological calendars are published annually featuring information about eclipses, moon phases, and planetary retrogrades for the year ahead. For years I'd buy one and try to add details to remind me of the magical power days that I wished to celebrate. I quickly learned that this wasn't a practical system for me—there was never enough space, and my handwriting would become so cramped that months later even I was unable to decipher my instructions to myself.

I then progressed to the next step in this book's evolution by creating my own calendars, filling notebooks with details of festivals, ancient and modern, creating what effectively became the love child of a day planner and a witch's Book of Shadows. In the process, I began taking note of the high quantities of e-mails and messages I received from readers of my previous books seeking similar information. I'd post something on my Facebook page about Hekate Night or Saint George's Eve or some other significant date, and within moments my mailboxes were flooded with questions about how best to celebrate, or honor a sacred being, or avail ourselves of a date's blessings, frequently too many to answer. Often the suggestions that I could make were very limited, because if you didn't already have the supplies, it was too late to obtain them. I realized that I was not the only one for whom a detailed, practical magical calendar would be beneficial.

It's All About Time: The Power of the Hour

What is a power day anyway? Is there a right time for magic? What is the right time for a spell? How important is time? Does it really matter when something occurs? Is there magic in the Western calendar?

Each and every day is a portal of energy and opportunity waiting to be grasped. The need to record, document, and organize time is primordial. Modern calendars are the result of an evolutionary process that began with marking time by the moon, sun, and stars and led to the construction of what are now called archaeo-astronomical structures—edifices carefully designed to be in alignment with specific celestial phenomena. Ireland's Newgrange, an over 5,000-year-old

passage tomb, is a prime example: above the entrance to the passage is an opening designed to be penetrated by light, specifically during the winter solstice and the days immediately surrounding it. Structures that similarly mark time in conjunction with celestial phenomena are found all over the globe, in places as far from each other as Cambodia, Mexico, and Egypt.

The earliest documented archaeo-astronomical site is currently believed to be the calendar circle at Nabta Playa, located approximately 800 kilometers south of Cairo and estimated to have been created in the fifth millennium BCE. But before any of these edifices could be conceived, let alone built, intimate knowledge of solar and lunar cycles was required. Let's retrace our steps. The very earliest calendar—the one that can be seen with the naked eye—relies on the moon.

Moon Phases: The Lunar Calendar

Our earliest ancestors didn't require a calendar at all. Instead, time was marked by the moon. The moon cycles reliably and consistently through a roughly twenty-eight-day cycle that begins with the first sighting of the new moon—a slender, luminous crescent in the sky. The moon then *waxes* (grows larger) over a period of approximately fourteen days, increasing from new moon to quarter-moon to half-moon and culminating in the beautiful shining full moon, which lingers for approximately three days, after which it begins to visibly *wane* (grow smaller). The moon's size rhythmically decreases from full to three-quarter to half to a quarter to a horn-like crescent, until finally it vanishes from the sky. This is the period of the dark moon—the moon is not visible, until approximately three days later, when the tiny sliver of the new moon shines forth once more.

Calculating time by the moon has its advantages. There's no need for literacy or complex calculations. *Anyone* able to see can look up at the night sky for themselves and recognize a moon phase. No one has to tell you the moon is full, nor do you have to purchase a calendar: you can see it. Each lunar month concludes with the arrival of the dark moon. A few nights later, the new lunar month begins with the first sighting of the new moon.

The Wheel of the Year: The Solar Year

Lunar cycles are short and easily visible, as opposed to the longer and more

subtle solar cycle. The solar year has been described as resembling a wheel with the equinoxes and solstices as spokes to mark its passage and enable us to keep time. As it's a circle, there's no obvious beginning or end: a solar year can begin at any designated point in the cycle. The earliest documented New Year's celebrations derive from Babylonia and coincided with the first new moon after the vernal equinox, thus combining lunar and solar cycles.

More information regarding equinoxes and solstices may be found in "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#)." The sheer number of rituals timed to coincide with them indicates their importance. It is important to emphasize that, unlike the lunar calendar, you can't just look at the sky and determine the passage of time. To accurately calculate and predict the arrival of equinoxes and solstices requires mathematical and astronomical knowledge. In the years before computers, you needed an expert to calculate the precise date of next year's summer solstice. The early and worldwide existence of this expertise is documented by all those ancient archaeo-astronomical sites.

All Roads Lead to Rome: The Evolution of the Modern Western Calendar

A calendar is a system of marking time and dividing it into increments such as days, weeks, months, and years. Calendars exist for many purposes—an advent calendar counts down the twenty-four or twenty-five days leading to Christmas, for example—but the most common calendar is the one that encompasses a year.

The modern Western calendar, technically called the Gregorian calendar, is currently the most widely used calendar in the world. It is the *lingua franca*—the common language—of time. Its roots lie in Rome. According to legend, Romulus, the founder of Rome, devised a calendar in approximately 738 BCE. This earliest Roman calendar was not conceived from thin air, but was based on the Greek calendar, which in turn derives from the Babylonian one. Although its early history is hazy, it's believed that this original Roman calendar consisted of 304 days organized into ten months: *Martius*, *Aprilis*, *Maius*, *Junius*, *Quintilis*, *Sextilis*, *September*, *October*, *November*, and *December*. The names of the first four of those months honor deities. (For details, see the introductory pages for the months [March](#), [April](#), [May](#), and [June](#) in this book.) The names of the last six months, however, refer to numbers: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

September is not the seventh month but the ninth. October not the eighth, but the tenth. November not the ninth but the eleventh. December is the most obvious to our eyes. Although it is now the twelfth and final month of our

calendar year, its name, related to words like “decimal” or “decagram,” refers to the number ten.

This isn’t carelessness or some attempt at sowing confusion. The names accurately reflect that earliest Roman calendar, whose year contained ten months, not our modern twelve. The time corresponding with the two winter months now called January and February was then unnamed and not technically part of the calendar year, but an approximately sixty-day amorphous lump of liminal time—neither in one year nor the next.

Numa Pompilius, the second emperor of Rome, who reigned from approximately 715 to 673 BCE, is credited with incorporating and naming two additional months, January and February, thus creating a twelve-month year, although Martius (March) remained the first month. By the first century BCE, however, this calendar had descended into chaos. As a 355-day *lunar* calendar, it was about ten days shorter than our current 365-day calendar. Months had been organized to correspond with lunar phases. The first day of each month—the *calends* or *kalends*—coincided with the new moon, while the *ides* (roughly the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the month) coincided with the full moon.

In order to keep their calendar in harmony with the seasons, *sometimes* the Romans added an extra intercalary month of twenty-seven or twenty-eight days to the year. Adding to the confusion, the Pontifex Maximus (Rome’s supreme religious leader) and the College of Pontiffs had the right to alter the calendar as they deemed best—to add or subtract days from a month—which they sometimes did for political purposes, so as to shorten or lengthen a particular public official’s term of office, for example.

In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar revamped and reformed the calendar, creating the Julian calendar, named in his honor. Caesar introduced an adapted version of the Egyptian solar calendar. A Roman year now consisted of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, divided into 12 months, further subdivided into 30 or 31 days each, with the exception of February, which, to keep the year in step with the seasons, consisted of 28 days with an extra day added to the month every fourth year. As Rome evolved into a great conquering power, they transported and imposed this calendar throughout their empire.

The Julian was the primary civil calendar in use throughout Europe until it was refined in the sixteenth century. The new calendar system, our present one, is known as the Gregorian calendar, honoring Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced it in October 1582. The Julian and Gregorian calendars are sometimes referred to as Old Style and New Style, respectively.

Initially, the new calendar was only accepted (mandated, actually) in Vatican-dominated territories. It would take centuries for Protestant and

Orthodox Christian nations to accept the change. Russia did not accept the Gregorian calendar until 1918, after the overthrow of its monarchy. And, of course, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims, among many others, maintained their own unique calendars. However, the Gregorian calendar eventually became the primary secular and business calendar on Earth. This is the calendar system reflected in this book's 365 days of magic (plus that extra day every fourth year).

How to Use This Book

The year is presented linearly from beginning to end, January 1 to December 31. The pages for each date contain commemorations, recommendations, suggestions, spells, rituals, and occasionally recipes. Simply follow the directions or use them to inspire and jump-start your own practice. This book is intended for use by *anyone* in conjunction with the Western calendar. Those seeking more specialized occult information, such as planetary hours, will find it easily available through many sources, whether published or online. It will complement the material in this book but is not necessary.

As will be immediately apparent, certain dates are packed with more information and suggestions than others: these dates are our magical superpower days. On those particular dates, for instance April 30, October 31, or November 2, numerous cultures, traditions, and divine beings are represented. This is because people all over the world and through the ages have recognized the inherent energies latent during these times and have sought to avail themselves of it in their own ways. I've done my best to create an inclusive, welcoming book that celebrates human diversity but is also an accurate reflection of the eclectic and highly personal paths so many of us pursue regarding magic and spirituality.

Magical superpower days tend to come in clusters, often grouped around the beginning, end, and middle of months with lulls in between, indicating their roots in the old lunar calendar. The first of the month once coincided with the appearance of the new moon, with the full moon arriving around the middle (the ides). Once the Julian calendar was adopted, these dates no longer jibed with astral phenomena, yet dates and festivals remained.

That said, as I was creating this calendar, I became aware that certain traditions are represented more than others. This is because their festivals and holy days are intended to correspond with our modern Western calendar (as opposed to the lunar calendars other traditions rely on). Thus, spirits deriving from Celtic, Roman, and African Diasporic pantheons are well represented, as are saints, both official and unofficial. Some sacred beings, whether goddesses or saints, have multiple dates associated with them—these are additional opportunities to avail yourself of their blessings and assistance.

Certain spells and rituals can traditionally be cast only on specific dates. This is noted where it is the case. If this is not specified, then it is *not* the case, and so feel free to adapt as best suits your needs. I recommend that you read ahead a little, keeping track of dates a few days or weeks in the future, which allows you time to prepare and make plans. The introductory pages for each month advise you of the holidays and magic power days it contains.

There are two kinds of holidays:

- Those with **fixed dates** occur on the same date annually. For example, Halloween and New Year's Eve are always October 31 and December 31, respectively.
- **Moveable feasts** are those whose dates vary from year to year. We can safely estimate them—Midsummer's Eve will be in late June, for example—but the precise date must be verified annually. If these moveable feasts consistently fall within one month, then they are referenced in the introductory pages for that month. However, "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#)" includes spells and rituals appropriate for solstices and equinoxes and the holidays associated with them, such as Mabon.

Pages for each date contain information regarding recommended spells and rituals, as well as spirits or saints associated with that day. It's human nature to diverge and argue: sometimes there's deep-seated debate as to precisely when a feast or holiday should be celebrated. For example, many believe that celebrations honoring Brigid are to be held on February 1. Others, however, prefer to honor her on the following day. In general, I have not chosen sides in what are sometimes passionate arguments but have given the option of both dates. For the reader's ease, primary information is given on the earlier date and then referenced on later dates.

This book contains sufficient introductory material for you to work with saints and spirits with whom you may not already be familiar. However, should

you seek further information, I've written more extensively about many of them in my previous publications, *Encyclopedia of Spirits* and *Encyclopedia of Mystics, Saints, and Sages*.

The book's primary focus is on the magical and the esoteric, but some significant historical events are also referenced, especially those that have transformed the energies of that date and colored our perceptions. For instance, the events of 2001 have caused September 11 to resonate differently than that date did previously.

Spellcasting and spiritual observances are intensely personal. I encourage you to personalize this book in ways that enhance your own practice. This is the fifth large book I have organized and written. I experience great joy when, over the years, people show me their copies of my books, all dog-eared and covered with color-coded sticky notes. If I have omitted a holiday or sacred being of significance to you, please feel free to incorporate.

This is especially true for readers Down Under. Social media has encouraged the internationalization of time. We now celebrate with friends all over the world, many of whom are in different time zones and hemispheres. Many Pagans and witches in the southern hemisphere reverse the conventional Wheel of the Year to better reflect local realities. This is not explored in depth in this book but only because of space constraints. This book is intended to be helpful: please adapt as suits your needs.

Are the dates and their correspondences accurate? Yes, to the best of my knowledge, the dates in this book are accurate. Do they line up *exactly* with the old Roman or other ancient calendars? No. How could they? Between calendar reforms and astronomical adjustments, it's highly unlikely. That's like asking if December 25 is "really" Jesus' birthday. It's highly unlikely, but the modern magic of Christmas does not depend on it.

The dates in this book will be effective. But if you find dates that are better for you—if fortuitous "accidents" or personal traditions work for you—then follow your instincts to empower your own magical year. Spellcasting is ideally an intuitive, joyful process, not a stressful one, and I wish you 365 magical days of success and fun.

365 Days of Magic

A Perpetual Calendar of Spells, Rituals, and Feasts



January

The first month of the modern Western calendar is named in honor of the Roman god, Janus. The name of the god and the name of the month are related to the Latin word *ianua*, meaning “door.” Janus, the Lord of Gates, opens the door to the new year.

Janus is a guardian spirit who favors those who practice divination. He may be invoked to bless any new projects or endeavors, similar to the way in which the now more famous spirits Papa Legba and Ganesha are invoked. Ask Janus to bless your new year with good fortune, success, or whatever your heart desires. His traditional Roman offerings involved grain: proto-focaccia-style breads or farro wheat mixed with salt. However, he is a spirit who looks to the future, as much as the past, and so adapt offerings as you deem best.

January is the doorway to the new year, a time for opportunities, renewals, and fresh starts. All around the world, many welcome the first moments of January with parties, celebrations, champagne, and luxury. However, there is also a shadow side to January, which includes stress, despair, depression, apprehension, or feelings of failure regarding troubles carried over from the previous year or about what remains incomplete or unfulfilled and possibly about what looms ahead.

January is a month of assessment. For many, the very first moments of the month (and thus the year) are akin to standing at a crossroads: we decide on paths to be taken for the year to come. Others may feel especially frustrated at their lack of choices at this pivotal time. In the terminology of Hoodoo, they feel “blocked.” If your New Year’s resolutions involve seeking new opportunities and changing your path, then incorporate luck, success, and blessing spells into your magical regimen. If you feel stymied and frustrated by lack of opportunities for growth and change, incorporate unblocking spells into your magical regimen.

Angel of January: Gabriel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Capricorn, Aquarius (both traditionally ruled by Saturn)

Bird of the Month: owl

Birthstone of the Month: garnet

Flowers of the Month: carnation, snowdrop

January's Holidays and Extra Power Days

New Year's Day: January 1

Epiphany Eve: January 5

Epiphany: January 6

Saint Agnes' Eve: January 20, especially for love magic and dream divination

February Eve: January 31, especially for devotees of Brigid

January 1

New Year's Day is the first day of a new calendar year. The energy of the day evokes freedom, liberation, and the opportunity to make a fresh start. If New Year's resolutions were not made on New Year's Eve, they can be made, renewed, reaffirmed, or revised today.

Everything that occurs today is potentially a first for the year: first words, first meal, first kiss, and so forth. Ideally, each first is auspicious, conscious, and significant. One New Year's superstition suggests that you wear new clothes all day today to ensure you will always have what you need this year.

If possible, spend the day—or at least a portion of it—doing something that brings you joy or that symbolizes your ambitions for the year, as it's widely believed that this day serves as a template for the year to come. (If this is not possible—should you find yourself in the hospital or at a funeral—celebrate the very next New Year on the calendar you can, as a sort of do-over. No need to wait a year. February, the very next month, hosts Chinese New Year, while March is the time for Persian New Year. Even if you are not Chinese or Persian, you can still avail yourself of the energy of new beginnings.)

Dreams dreamt today, especially the first one, are considered especially auspicious and prophetic. If yours is not a good dream, if it leaves you shaken or is a genuine nightmare, then consider it a warning: plan some cleansing rituals, strengthen relations with your

spiritual allies and guardians, and repair any unfinished business carried over from years past.

As befitting the inaugural day of the Western calendar year, today is chock-full of suggested magic spells and rituals, beginning with exerting some control over who is the first person to enter your door.

First Footing Ritual

Who is the first over the threshold of a home in the new year? It's widely believed that this first person determines the kind of luck the household will have in the coming year. Rather than leave matters to chance, the tradition of first footing attempts to maintain control over the process. Chimneysweeps, for example, were once believed to be the bearers of luck—they would be paid to enter homes just after midnight on January 1. The chimneysweep would enter, be given a drink and payment, and depart, leaving good luck in his wake.

Wide variations exist as to the identity of the ideal first footer. The crucial point is that it is not left to chance. As with magic spells, in general, this ritual stems from the desire to control your own destiny and luck. So, choose who will be the first guest to pass through your door, whether after midnight or during the day. It is, however, widely believed that someone who resides within the house on a regular basis cannot serve as a first footer. You cannot leave the house at 11:59 p.m. on December 31 and reenter at 12:01 a.m. on January 1. If you have been away for New Year's Eve, reentering your own home does not count. The first footer must be a nonresident. It does not have to be someone you know well or even like (although that would be ideal), just someone perceived as a luck-bringer.

New Year's Cleansing Spells and Rituals

New Year's Day is widely believed to be an ideal day to perform personal cleansing spells and rituals to wipe away the aura of the old year and begin the new year cleansed and fresh. Some traditions also believe that it's an ideal time to cleanse your personal space, such as your home (or an office, if you feel as if it's become your other home.) This, however, is controversial.

Remember, magic consistently adapts to our current circumstances and needs. During epidemics, literal first footing may be challenging, dangerous, or even obsolete. As an alternative, consciously choose the first website, e-mail, or piece of mail opened in the new year, so that it is auspicious, lucky, and represents your hopes and ambitions.

HOUSE CLEANING

To clean or not to clean: some schools of metaphysical thought, especially East Asian, believe one should not clean or dispose of *anything* on New Year's Day, lest one accidentally throw out one's luck. For optimal good luck and to prevent loss, nothing should leave your home. If something *must* be removed, bring something else in as an exchange or balance. Don't pay bills, or money will flow out of your household all year. Meanwhile and perhaps deriving from ancient Celtic traditions of washerwomen as harbingers of doom, some European traditions suggest that doing laundry or washing dishes today is unlucky, as it's believed to encourage a death in the family in the new year. Leave everything until tomorrow and explain that you're not being lazy—you're just being cautious.

However, other schools, particularly those of Scandinavia, suggest otherwise. Their belief is that cleaning on New Year's Day is a way to provide magical protection to one's household. Do what feels right to you. Follow your own magical traditions and inclinations. However, if you are of the cleaning-on-New-Year's-Day-is-beneficial school of thought, then the following house cleansing ritual is believed to provide magical protection for the year to come:

1. Sweep up all dust and dirt.
2. Bring the sweepings to a crossroads and dispose of them there.
3. Littering is illegal. Being fined or arrested first thing on New Year's is not lucky, so be sensible and responsible. Dust may be allowed to disperse into the air and earth, but anything larger than that must be disposed of properly: many modern urban and suburban crossroads feature trash cans.

PERSONAL CLEANSING SPELLS

Any sort of spiritual cleansing spell is auspicious today, and you may already

have your personal favorites. However, there are also rituals intended specifically for this day.

Bain Demarré

In the French Caribbean, it's traditional to journey to the sea or a river to partake of cleansing baths intended to remove negative vestiges of the past year, including lingering bad luck and the effects of malicious witchcraft. This enables the bather to begin anew with a clean slate and to open themselves up for luck. It is not sufficient to simply submerge yourself in the water, however; the *bain demarré* involves herbal and sometimes other ingredients. Every family or even individual may have their own personal magical formula—there isn't one standard recipe. Incorporate fresh or dried flowers and leaves, as well as fragrant perfumes. A rub-down with a codfish tail may be incorporated, as it's believed to bring good luck. Although visiting a natural body of water is ideal, if unable, the ritual may be performed at home.

- This tradition is closely associated with New Year's Day, and some prefer to begin the New Year by bathing at midnight.

Saining

“Sain” is a Scottish word indicating blessing, consecration, or protection. It derives from a Gaelic word meaning a protective charm. *Saining* are Scottish rituals of blessing and protection. As with the *bain demarré*, a wide variety exist, depending on region, household, and family traditions. Most involve smoke, water, or a combination of the two. Use juniper smoke to sain space, people, or animals, or sprinkle with magical liquids. Examples of these liquids include:

- Water collected from a holy well or other magical site. (The power of the water will be enhanced if collected between midnight and dawn during a waxing moon.)
- Water from a living source, such as a stream or river, that has been crossed by both the living and the dead. (For example, water from a body of water that has been crossed by a funeral procession. Ideally, the water is obtained from beneath the bridge, but as close as is safely possible is fine.)

Various methods of sprinkling the water also exist. In some households, the lady of the house sprinkles everyone else or is, at least, in charge of the ritual. In others, participants gather in a circle and sprinkle themselves with the water.

Those with access to a well can partake of another old Scottish tradition: the

first pail of water drawn from a well on New Year's Day is believed to have magical properties and to provide good luck for the year ahead. This may be accomplished by drinking the water or adding it to personal cleansing rituals, providing this is safe. It may also be used to clean one's home, garments, altar, or ritual tools. The water may be bottled and saved for later use—its ability to provide good fortune has no expiration date, although it may no longer be suitable to drink.

If you have cast the lucky money burial spell that begins on New Year's Eve, remember to dig up the money before midnight today in order to complete the spell. (See the entry for [December 31](#) for details.)

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

Folk tradition originating in Britain but also popular throughout Canada and the US suggests that to have luck all month long, the first word you say out loud on the first day of each month should be “rabbit.” This tradition dates back to at least the thirteenth century, and there are numerous variations. It may be sufficient to say the word once, others insist on twice, and I was taught to say it three times. Some specify that you must say “white rabbit” instead. Another variant suggests that if two people are together, the first to speak says, “Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit” and the other responds, “Hare, hare, hare.” These should be your first words upon waking, but night owls may make it the first words after midnight—or both. In addition to luck, some believe that if you remember to say “rabbit,” you'll receive a wish or a gift that month.

Special New Year's Foods

Special foods are consumed on New Year's Day, most especially foods that represent wealth and luck.

- Beans, lentils, and sliced vegetables, such as carrots or turnips, symbolize an abundance of coins. Foods that are golden in hue, like cornbread, may provide the same effect.
- Greens such as basil leaves, cabbage, and collards represent cash; the leafier the greens, the better.
- Sweet citrus fruits such as oranges and tangerines are exchanged as gifts and eaten, but make sure these are varieties that have seeds. Save the first

seeds you encounter. Dry them and place them in your purse or wallet, as it's believed this guarantees that you will have sufficient funds all year and that your money will grow.

- Foods that traditionally and auspiciously symbolize increase include black-eyed peas, fish, and fenugreek seeds. This includes dishes like the southern US staple, Hoppin' John.

The Omen Days

Today is the seventh of the Omen Days. Don't let New Year's Day festivities distract you from seeking or receiving an omen for July, the seventh month. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), corresponding to the first Omen Day.)

Spirits of the Day

AESCULAPIUS

Today is the Roman feast of Aesculapius (also spelled Aesclepius and Asklepios), an ancient Greek deity of healing. It's believed crucial to start the year off right with Aesculapius to help ensure a new year of good health.

Aesculapius' ancient shrines were among the world's first hospitals. He is the patron of physicians and healers of all kinds; today is an excellent day to pay tribute to him. He may also be invoked to heal any illness. Aesculapius delivers messages in dreams. His ancient temples had space reserved for people to sleep and receive dream visitations from the deity. Aesculapius is rarely seen without his animal familiars, snakes and dogs, emblems of his healing powers. It is traditional to offer him miniature images of the anatomical part in need of healing. These little charms, typically made of some sort of metal, inexpensive as well as precious, are now widely known as *milagros*, which is Spanish for "miracles," but they are known as *tamata* in Greek.

Today is also a feast day shared by four Roman or Italian deities. They are typically honored together, although this is not absolutely necessary, and you may choose to honor one or more. All four may share an altar. If honoring them all, give offerings to Janus first, then Juno, Jupiter, and Fortuna, in that order, although they are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Fortuna, the original Lady Luck, was an important member of the Roman

pantheon, although she may originally be Etruscan or Latin. Fortuna holds the wheel of fortune and an overflowing cornucopia. Request her blessings for good luck throughout the year. Fortuna rules oracles and the energies that lead to conception and reproduction. Her traditional offering is a wheel-shaped cake, plus a blend of milk, honey, and poppyseeds.

- Janus: although the entire month is named for him and dedicated to him, today is his feast day. Janus, a guardian of gates, sees the past, present, and future, all simultaneously. He may be invoked for blessings of good fortune now and for the year to come. Invoke him to make sense of the past and to begin anew.
- Juno, Queen of Rome's pantheon, is often portrayed as a veiled woman holding a flower in one hand and an infant in the other. The first day of every Roman month was dedicated to her. Her name derives from the same root source as words like *one* (*uno* in Italian), *universe*, and *unicycle*. Offer her figs, peacock feathers, and luxurious flowers, especially roses and irises.
- Jupiter is the King of Rome's pantheon. His name derives from the Latin *Deus Pater* meaning "Sacred Father." Supreme deity of Rome, Lord of Light and ruler of the daytime, Jupiter also rules thunder, lightning, and weather. He is a remote deity, not as beloved as the other Roman deities who share this day with him, as he is not as personally involved with the lives of devotees; however, this is a good day to honor him. If today is a Thursday, his special day, then it's especially appropriate. Jupiter is *jovial*—typically good humored (unless offended), so any sort of favor may be requested. Offer him wine and honey cake.

YEMAYA, QUEEN OF THE SEA

Today is also a day to celebrate Yemaya, the Yoruba Queen of the Sea. Festivities that may have begun on New Year's Eve continue today. If you did not celebrate last night, you may begin today. You may request her assistance for the year to come or with any of the issues that fall under her domain including women's reproductive health, ending abuse and domestic violence, and increased fertility. Yemaya may be celebrated at your home or hers: the beach. Her traditional offerings include blue, white, and transparent crystals, such as larimar, selenite, or clear quartz, as well as white flowers, scented soap, and perfume. Yemaya's number is 7, as in the seven seas and seven stars.

White Rose Cleansing Ritual

This ritual is inspired by Yemaya and may be dedicated to her. Although it is traditionally done today, it may be performed at any time. The roses are tools for cleansing, not offerings. If you are incorporating a petition to Yemaya, give her a gift, as well: perhaps additional white roses or bars of scented soap.

1. Gently rub your body with seven white roses, one at a time, moving in the direction away from your heart. (Florists' roses are unlikely to have thorns. But if these are roses from your garden, remember to remove the thorns first.)
2. Focus on removing whatever has defiled you or prevents your success and happiness.
3. If you are at the beach, toss the roses into the sea, one by one. If elsewhere, wrap the roses in fresh white tissue paper or a clean white towel in order to safely transport them. But once at the beach, only throw the flowers into the water. Bring the covering home or dispose of it appropriately.

If a trip to the beach is not possible, recreate the ocean at home by adding copious quantities of sea salt to a bath. Wrap up the roses and dispose of them outside your home.



January 2

Today is about returning to a sense of normalcy after indulging in food, drink, and celebration around the holidays.

The Omen Days

Today is the eighth of the Twelve Omen Days. Remember to seek or receive an omen for August, the eighth month. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), the first Omen Day.)

Saints and Spirits of the Day

TANUKI

The tanuki (*Nictereutes procyonoides*) is also known as the Japanese badger or the racoon dog. Its genus is *Nictereutes*, which translates as “night wanderer.” Although the tanuki is an actual mid-sized East Asian mammal, it’s also the name of a shapeshifting *yokai* that frequently assumes the form of the animal, although they have very little else in common. (Yokai encompasses a vast quantity of Japanese spirits.)

Tanuki spirits are sacred clowns, rarely malevolent, but inevitably gluttonous. What they love best is to go out drinking. Tricksters, they are highly skilled at getting others to pay for their drinks. Tanukis steer people toward their favorite bars specifically for that purpose. Tanukis are good for the bar business, and so you will often find images of tanukis in Japanese restaurants and drinking establishments, as the tanuki is believed to magnetically draw a crowd. (And if you own such a business, you may wish to obtain a tanuki image, which should be placed near the entrance, facing outward, or near cash registers, facing customers.)

Of course, there is always the morning after. Tanuki Udon is a delicious Japanese noodle soup. The “tanuki” in its name is the hint that it’s also believed to be a magical hangover cure. The soup is topped with deep-fried tempura batter—a favorite of tanukis. A tanuki itself will not help you with your hangover. Instead it will encourage you to return to drinking. There are saints, however, who may be invoked for healing and assistance: Bibiana and Drogo.

THE HANGOVER SAINTS

- Saint Bibiana: this early Christian martyr’s name was originally Viviana or Vibiana; traditionally she is invoked to heal headaches including even the worst migraines. Because Vibiana rhymes with Bibiana, which evokes “bibulous”—meaning “marked by the consumption of alcoholic beverages”—and because too much alcohol may result in a headache, Bibiana has emerged as to go-to saint for hangovers. If she heals you now, promise to light a candle for her on her feast day, December 2. Mark your calendar so that you do not forget.
- Saint Drogo’s associations with hangovers may derive from his prime patronage: he is the patron saint of coffee, something that many swear is a hangover cure, even if science doesn’t agree. Drogo is the patron of coffee,

those who grow it, prepare it, serve it, and love it. He's also a friend of those who need a strong cup of joe. It is his primary offering: share a pot with him and, if he comes through for you, light a candle for him, too.

Saint of the Day

SAINT SERAPHIM OF SAROV

Today is the feast day of Saint Seraphim of Sarov (1754–1833). A renowned miracle worker during his lifetime, Seraphim reputedly continues to be one long after his death. He is invoked for all favors or blessings, but his specialties have historically been exorcisms, fertility, and healing. Invoke Seraphim's blessings with candles, incense, charity, and good deeds, especially on behalf of animals. (Other feast days associated with him are January 15 and August 1.)

January 3

The Omen Days

Today is the ninth of the Twelve Omen Days. Remember to seek or receive an omen for September, the ninth month. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), corresponding to the first Omen Day.)

* * *

Today may be a good time to consider New Year's resolutions made. Resolutions are frequently ephemeral, although they are typically things we deeply and genuinely seek to accomplish. In the optimism of New Year's Eve, we make plans, but in the cold light of the ensuing January days, we forget them or fear they cannot be accomplished. Enlist a Daruma doll to encourage and help ensure your success.

Daruma Dolls

Daruma dolls are painted papier-mâché tumblers constructed to right themselves

when they tip over. Their name evokes Bodhidharma, the Buddhist sage and bodhisattva known in Japan as Daruma. In Japan, Daruma evolved into a unique and powerful guardian spirit, who protects against earthquakes, serious illnesses, and infertility. He is the essence of persistence and perseverance, regardless of obstacles or adversity. Daruma's motto, "Fall down seven times, get up eight," is the key to the Daruma doll, which serves as a talisman for achieving your goals. (If you have multiple resolutions, you will need multiple dolls—one doll per goal.)

Daruma dolls come in various sizes and colors, although the default is red and black, Daruma's primary colors. The Daruma dolls that are suitable for this purpose are crafted and sold with their eyes left unpainted.

Here is the ritual:

1. Hold your doll in your hands while you focus on your resolution or goal. Do your best to articulate it as clearly and concisely as possible.
2. Activate the Daruma doll by painting in one eye, leaving the other one unpainted.
3. Place Daruma where you can see him and he can see you. The stern-faced doll will help keep you faithful to your goals.
4. Once your resolution has been accomplished, paint in the other eye. (And if your resolution has no termination date, Daruma can keep gazing at you with one eye indefinitely.)
5. Save your Daruma doll as a memento of your success and accomplishment.

Festival of Sleep

January 3 has been designated the Festival of Sleep, a day to catch up on sleep missed over the recent holidays. People are encouraged to stay in bed and sleep (although those who are employed and wish to remain so should verify that this is acceptable with their bosses before taking the day off.)

Magical tools believed to encourage sound sleep include crystals like amethyst, angelite, black tourmaline, celestite, labradorite, lepidolite, selenite, clear quartz, and rose quartz. Flower essences believed to benefit sound sleep include Cherry Plum, Impatiens, Morning Glory, and White Chestnut. A few drops of essential oil of lavender or frankincense on your pillowcase has been shown to encourage relaxation and sleep.

Perhaps it's insufficient just to sleep. What you really want is to dream. The following dried herbs and resins can be ground up in a mortar and pestle to form dream incense: acacia leaves, copal, mastic, mugwort, myrrh, star anise. Any combination may be used, but mugwort is the key ingredient.

DREAM INCENSE

1. Sprinkle a bit of the dried herb on a lit charcoal in an incense burner.
2. Burn in the room where you will sleep *before* you go to sleep.
3. For the sake of fire safety, be sure the charcoal is no longer smoldering before you fall asleep.
4. Relax and dream.

Saint of the Day

SAINT GENEVIEVE

Today is the feast of Saint Genevieve, matron saint of the city of Paris. Genevieve lived during the fifth century and was instrumental in the conversion to Christianity of the Merovingian King Clovis I.

Genevieve may be invoked for anything, but she is especially renowned for preventing disasters including floods or fire. Among those she favors are Parisians, female warriors, and those who craft or otherwise work with candles. Burn a candle for her today. Traditional offerings include French products such as wine, cheese, pastry, and perfume.

January 4

The Omen Days

Today is the tenth of the Twelve Omen Days, the day to receive or seek an omen for October, the tenth month of the year. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), corresponding to the first Omen Day.)

* * *

Tomorrow and the next day, January 5 and 6, are associated with numerous spirits and rituals and are considered among the most magically powerful days of the year. Today is a good day to prepare for the days ahead. It's also a good day for a money spell.

Basic Money Spell

The simplest money spell of all involves lighting a green, gold, or white candle.

1. Carve the candle, if you like, by scratching your name, birthday, and other identifying information, such as the sigil for your astrological sign, into the wax. If a specific amount of money is needed, carve that number into the candle, too. For example: \$100.
2. Rub the candle with a money oil (see [below](#)), beginning at the middle of the candle and rubbing up and down. (You may omit this step if unable to find, create, or afford money oil.)
3. Hold the candle in your hands and visualize your goal accomplished. This is the most crucial step.
4. Burn the candle.

Basic Money Oil

There are numerous variations of money-attracting oils. Add two or more of the following essential oils to a vial of jojoba oil: basil, bergamot, chamomile, vetiver, and Texas cedarwood. There are also numerous ways to use it:

- Use it in candle spells like the one above.
- Sprinkle it lightly on your cash or coins.
- Rub a drop between your palms before beginning a new business enterprise, gambling, or seeking a loan.
- Dab it lightly on invoices before mailing them.



January 5

Today ushers in an intense period of spiritual and magical activity that begins after sundown tonight. The energy during hours of daylight is electric and anticipatory. The energy beginning at twilight and continuing until sunrise on January 6 is magical and wild, fuel for your magical workings. It's a night of intense spirit activity and revelry, perfect for all sorts of rituals and spells. You may avail yourself of tonight's wild power for *any* magical use, not only those suggested here. If you have been considering a spell, tonight should be a good night for it.

The energy is also generous. Many of the spirits out roaming tonight are welcomed as gift-givers, even if feared and avoided at other times. If there is something you need and you seek spiritual intervention, whether from tonight's spirits, your ancestors, or any other kind of spirit, tonight is a good time to ask. Elaborate rituals may be held, but simply asking from your heart using clear, precise language may be enough.

The Omen Days

Today is the eleventh of the Twelve Omen Days. Remember to seek or receive an omen for November, the eleventh month of the year. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), corresponding to the first Omen Day.)

Twelfth Night Cake or King Cake

Whether celebrated on the 5th or the 6th, Twelfth Night is a party night that officially marks the end of the Christmas season. It's customary to serve a Twelfth Night Cake, also known as a King Cake, in honor of the Three Kings (Magi), whose feast is tomorrow. King cakes come in different shapes, and recipes vary depending on locale, but typically these cakes are divinatory—something, typically a tiny baby doll, is hidden within the cake, discovered only when it appears in someone's slice. Receiving the King Cake charm is considered very lucky, although typically it also brings obligations.

The magical roots of Epiphany Eve may predate Christianity. In the Northern lands, where the witches fly tonight and the Wild Hunt rides, this may have been the culmination of earlier solstice celebrations. Tonight's witches may be reasserting ancient rights.

The most common variant of this tradition mandates that the person who receives the baby must host next year's Twelfth Night party or at least provide the cake. However, the cake derives from a tradition of charm-laden cakes that dates back at least to the Saturnalia, Rome's ancient winter festival. Trinkets hidden within the cake, such as beans, beads, rings, and other small tokens, may be interpreted to discover the receiver's fate in the year to come. For example, the person finding the hidden ring in their slice would expect to be wed in the year to come, while the discovery of a coin presages wealth. A wishbone indicates that your wish will come true. Modern American king cakes, especially those commercially produced, typically will contain only one charm—a plastic baby. However, you can easily add more charms to a cake, whether homemade or store-bought. If reproducing the custom of trinket-laden fortune cakes, it's wise to tie a string to the charm or place individual charms inside small food-safe envelopes, in order to prevent swallowing.

In New Orleans, tonight marks the beginning of Carnival season, culminating at Mardi Gras. Hundreds of thousands of king cakes are sold annually in Louisiana, but the custom is now becoming popular elsewhere in the US. Similar traditions exist around the world. In Spanish-speaking areas, the cake is known as a *Rosca de Reyes*, while in Portuguese these cakes are called *Bolo-rei*, and in French, *Galette des Rois*.

Epiphany Eve

The Wild Hunt, that pack of spectral riders, is out in full force tonight. Some believe tonight is their last hurrah until autumn, although others believe they'll keep riding until the spring equinox. (Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for Wild Hunt for further details.) If you seek to encounter them, tonight is a great opportunity. (And if you prefer to avoid them, then tonight is a good night to stay indoors.) A trio of Germanic witch goddesses Berchta, Herta, and Hulda also roam the night, and it's time for Befana, their Italian counterpart, to fly.

Tonight is a great night for divination in any form—whether via cards, runes, crystal gazing, charm casting, or interpreting charms received in a cake.

During the medieval era, those who perceived Paganism and witchcraft as frightening considered tonight to be especially dangerous. Paradoxically, they relied on the Magi, the Holy Wizard Saints, for protection. For those who still fear the spirits of Epiphany Eve, Magi-themed amulets are believed to provide protection. Although more elaborate items exist, for a quick fix, use chalk to scrawl their initials on your door: *CMB*.

CMB are the initials for the names given to the Magi or Three Kings by the Western Church: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. For amuletic purposes, at least, they must be written in this specific order, as they form an acronym for *Christus mundum benedicat* or “Christ blesses the world.” These initials may be used at other times, as well: some include them discreetly on mail, documents, and spellwork.

Witches of the Night

Tonight is sacred to several witch goddesses, and if one of them is your favorite, it’s a great night to honor her. However, all these spirits are compatible, and you may venerate some or all of them together. They will share an altar. Some speculation exists that Hulda and Berta are, respectively, northern and southern German manifestations of the same goddess.

BEFANA

Befana la Strega is a benevolent Italian witch. Although she predates Christianity, her mythology has become inextricably linked to it. Befana’s name derives from “Epiphany” and some call the holiday by her name. In Italy, Befana replaces Santa Claus. Like their American counterparts, Italian children hang stockings, but it’s Befana who fills them, bringing treats to good children and lumps of coal to the disobedient. (As a compromise, candy that resembles coal exists.)

Befana is more than just the Christmas witch, however. Although she is at the peak of her power tonight, she is active throughout the year. Associated with the joys of life, Befana is invoked in spells for love, romance, wealth, and the

things, great and small, that bring happiness. Here is an example.

Red Witch Befana Spell

1. Write her a polite note expressing your desires.
2. Place the note beneath a red witch candle and light it. (If unable to find a witch-shaped candle, don't despair. Light a plain red or white candle instead.)
3. Once the candle has burned down, examine the wax for auspicious signs indicating that Befana has heard your plea.

Befana may be a modern manifestation of an ancient Italian goddess. There are theories that she is a really Strenia or Hekate in disguise, or perhaps her original identity is now unknown. The broom she wields was an emblem of midwifery for the Romans in the way that a red-and-white striped pole now symbolizes a barber. It may indicate Befana's ability to grant fertility or to sweep away unpleasant traces of the old year.

According to Christian folklore, Befana was an elderly woman who was too busy cleaning to join the Magi on their journey to the Christ child when they invited her. (And why they would invite her may be the key to her identity.) Later, she had regrets, and has been trying to catch up with the Magi ever since, leaving gifts for children on her way. As with Santa and her sister-witch Berta, it's customary to leave gifts for Befana, too. Offer her a small plate of Italian pastries and some espresso or *Strega liquore*, Italy's delicious witch liquor.

BERTA

Frau Berta (also known as Berchta or Perchta, depending on region and local pronunciation) is a southern German goddess of abundance: whatever you give her will be returned to you manifold, so be careful what you offer. In pre-Christian times, she was a guardian of children, both living and dead. Berta rules an afterlife realm where babies and children can safely play, until it's time for them to be reborn in new incarnations. Berta may be the original Mother Goose, as she sometimes manifests with one webbed foot, perhaps indicating her origins as an ancient swan goddess.

Once an incredibly popular goddess, when the regions where she was worshipped were converted to Christianity, Berta was demonized and subject to a smear campaign. As she was aggressively rebranded as a witch goddess, those who still worshipped her were considered witches. Berta evolved into a type of

bogeywoman, used to control and punish children. (“If you won’t be good, Berta will get you!”) Parents were warned that if babies weren’t baptized, they’d end up in Berta’s afterlife realm.

Tonight is *Berchennacht* or Berchta’s Night (alternative spelling: *Perchennacht*) and is the time of her greatest annual activity. Berta, who is among the leaders of the Wild Hunt, flies through the night, leading a procession of Pagan babies whose souls she guards in the afterlife. She may be accompanied by *Straggele*, malicious, horned spirits who partake of offerings left for Frau Berta and do her bidding. Christmas roses (hellebore) may signal Berta’s presence.

As with Santa, Befana, and the Magi, it’s customary to leave gifts for Berta, as vestiges of veneration have survived in folk tradition. In Alpine regions, Berta’s offerings were traditionally left on the roofs of houses, so she can grab them while flying past. Berta’s taste runs to the substantial: she prefers liquor, savory pancakes, and herring and dumplings, rather than cookies and milk. It’s best not to displease her. Legend says that if she seeks offerings and can’t find them (or if they aren’t substantial or tasty enough), Berta will slice open your stomach, devour your intestines, and then sew you back up with *schmutz* like straw and pebbles inserted to fill the gap where your intestines used to be. Berta is a gift giver tonight, credited with leaving small presents for good children. If offerings please her, Berta can bless a home with wealth and good health. Pagan parents who prefer a goddess to Santa may consider an offering table for her.

HERTA

A mysterious and ancient goddess, Herta’s name is immortalized in the name given our planet. During the peak of her veneration, mainly in the Baltic region, Herta (also known as Eartha, Erda, Hertha, and Nerthus) was the subject of a mystery tradition. Very little information about her survives. The Church’s aggressive smear campaign against her indicates that she was once important. Paradoxically, as with the goddess Freya, who may be her daughter, had the Church not demonized her, she might have been forgotten. Instead, Herta survives as a witch goddess who rides out with the Wild Hunt. She rides with Odin, who, mythology suggests, may be her lover. Herta carries a stalk of valerian that doubles as a scepter and a riding crop for her mount, a deer wearing a crown made of hops.

HULDA

Also known as Holda, Frau Holle, and Mother Holle, this goddess also derives

from what is now Germany. The most famous of this trio of Germanic witch goddesses, she is the subject of the popular Brothers Grimm fairytale, “Mother Holle,” in which she rewards the kind and industrious but punishes those who are lazy and rude. Hulda is a goddess of life and death, providing fertility and receiving the souls of the dead into her afterlife realm, where they may be rejuvenated and replenished before beginning new incarnations. She may be the Queen of the Elves. Hulda leads a retinue of forest fairies, known as the Hulden, and is accompanied and served by a retinue of rabbits, among her sacred creatures.

Hulda, too, was demonized as a witch goddess. She evolved into a bogeywoman used to intimidate children into desired behavior. Tonight, she is among the leaders of the Wild Hunt, heading a parade of the souls of Pagan babies.

January 6

Today is among the primary magic power days of the year with many varied opportunities for spellwork and rituals. The energy carries over from last night’s Epiphany Eve, although the daylight hours may be more sedate.

The Omen Days

Today is the twelfth and last of the Twelve Omen Days, the day to seek or receive an omen for next December, the twelfth month of the year. (For more information on the Twelve Omen Days, please see the entry for [December 26](#), corresponding to the first Omen Day.)

Epiphany

The word *Epiphany* derives from Greek and means “manifestation” or “appearance.” The holiday represents different commemorations for different denominations of Christianity.

The Feast of the Magi

The story of the Magi's quest to locate Baby Jesus is only told in one of the four canonical Gospels. The Gospel of Matthew describes the gifts they bring (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), the panic they instill in King Herod, as well as the wise men's quick response to dreams advising them that they're in danger—they return home, rather than visiting Herod, their original plan. Everything else about them, including and especially their names and identities, is folklore and conjecture.

“Magi” is the plural of magus; today is the feast of the magician saints. The historical Magi were a learned caste in ancient Persia, skilled in the magical arts, who served as ritual priests of ancient indigenous Iranian religion. By the first century CE, corresponding with the birth of Jesus and the earliest years of Christianity, the Magi had been supplanted by Zoroastrianism, the religion based on the teachings of Zoroaster (Zarathustra). Although a few retained positions as royal advisors, many became wandering—and sometimes disreputable—magicians.

The Magi of the Nativity are the first to acknowledge Christ's divinity. The three are venerated together and separately. Each has his own feast day, as well as today's shared one.

The Magi are the patron saints of healers, astrologers, and any kind of stargazers. Despite tremendous distance and no communication beyond the astral, the Magi managed to locate Jesus. Thus, they are the patron saints of travelers and are invoked in the following dream spell to locate whoever or whatever is missing.



MAGI LOCATION SPELL

1. Inscribe the name of whoever or whatever you're seeking onto a flat beeswax tablet. Focus on your quest while carving into the wax.
2. If you identify the Magi with the names given them (see [Three Kings](#) below), you may inscribe these onto the other side of the tablet. Otherwise inscribe symbols that represent them to you, for example, stars, a moon shape, or crown.
3. If you like, rub a couple of drops of Three Kings Oil (see [below](#)) onto the

tablet, but it's not necessary—the scent of beeswax is sufficient.

4. Place the tablet beneath your pillow or within the pillowcase on which you will sleep.
5. Pay attention to your dreams. The response may be direct but may very likely be oblique. If you analyze your dreams, you should discover clues that will assist your success.

The Feast of the Three Kings

Celebrations that began the night before may continue today. King cakes are eaten. Children receive presents, ostensibly from the Three Kings, who, of course, are renowned as great gift givers. A formula oil known as Three Kings Oil transmits their power, as well as the magic of those original gifts:

THREE KINGS OIL

Ingredients: frankincense, myrrh, gold, as well as a base oil such as sweet almond or grapeseed. Frankincense and myrrh may be used in either essential oil or resin form.

Note: If you're using resin, preparing and adding it will be the first step. If using essential oils, adding them will be the last step.

You will not need very much of any ingredient; however, quantity is dependent on the size of the bottle you wish to fill with this oil. If you are using a tiny vial, obviously you will need commensurate quantities.

1. If using resin, the first step is to pound and grind the frankincense and myrrh together in a mortar and pestle. As you grind, focus on the Magi and the assistance you hope to receive from them.
2. Add the combined resins to a small bottle of base oil.
3. Gold may be incorporated in the form of a small gold bead or charm, but you can also use edible gold leaf, which is sold flaked for use in gold-flecked cocktails, but is a very appropriate size for this oil, too. The gold should be added next.
4. If using essential oils rather than resin, add them now: just a few drops of each is sufficient.
5. Roll the closed bottle gently to distribute its contents.

This oil may be used to dress candles and charm bags. It is typically used for employment, wealth, and prosperity spells, but you may also use it to promote safe travel, prophetic dreams, and to pay tribute to the Magi for favors requested or received.

Feast of Simbi

By extension, today is a feast day for the snake-magician spirit, Simbi, who, in some Vodou traditions, is syncretized to the Magi. (He may also be identified with Archangel Raphael, the biblical Moses, or Saint Andrew.) In Chapter Seven of the *Book of Exodus*, Pharaoh's magicians transform their staffs into snakes in a display of magical prowess. This is countered by Moses and his brother Aaron whose staff turns into a snake that devours those of the magicians.

Simbi is the magician *and* he is the snake. Simbi is a master healer and a patron of magical practitioners. Today is an excellent day to honor him and request his favor. Offer him beverages including spring water, whisky, fig brandy (*mahia*), and vodka infused with fruits such as mangoes and pears. He likes the fruit, too. He will also accept magical tools, beautiful fabrics, and images of snakes.

Saints of the Day

KING SAINT CASPAR

Today is the feast of Saint Caspar or Gaspar, one of the Three Kings. He may be venerated independently today. King Saint Caspar is usually, but not always, envisioned as the King of China or the King of the Orient and acknowledged as the king who traveled farthest to find Jesus. (In some versions of the legend, the kings converge in Bethlehem, rather than traveling together.) Caspar brought the gift of gold.

Witch Goddesses of the Day

Devotions to these witch goddesses may continue from last night, or you may celebrate them today instead: Befana, Berta, Herta, and Hulda. In some German-speaking areas, today is known as Perchtentag or Perchta's Day—Perchta being a regional pronunciation of Berta.

January 7

Saint Distaff Day

Saint Distaff Day is celebrated today, the day following Epiphany. There is no actual “Saint” Distaff. It references the spinning tool—a long staff to which fibers are attached to prevent them from tangling. Although it now must be defined, once upon a time, distaffs were common household items, as recognizable as brooms. Like brooms, distaffs are associated with witches, who are portrayed riding them.

Today is also called Roc Day, as “roc” or “rock” can be a synonym for distaff. It is a holy day for spinners. Traditionally, women returned to their spinning today, now that the Twelve Days of Christmas are over. It’s an excellent day to begin new crafts projects, whether alone or in company. It’s also potentially a day for playing pranks.

Distaffs have been used to represent women, in general, but are also specifically emblematic of the Norse goddess Frigga and the Germanic Berchta. (See [January 5](#).) Some Russian distaffs are crafted to resemble women. It is an excellent day for any kind of fabric magic—spells cast via sewing, weaving, spinning, or through needlework. For instance, embroider an image of the successful outcome of your desired spell. Recite affirmations with each stitch.

Saints of the Day

SAINT KING MELCHIOR

Today is the feast of Saint Melchior, one of the Three Kings. (Please see [January 6](#) for more details.) Folklore suggests that Melchior was the King of Arabia. He is envisioned as an elderly, white-bearded man who wears red robes. Melchior is credited with bringing the gift of myrrh. (Opposing traditions say he brought gold, and Caspar, whose feast was yesterday, contributed the myrrh.) Saint King Melchior is invoked for wealth and prosperity. Offer him a cool glass of water, light a candle for him, and burn frankincense and myrrh as incense.



January 8

Feast of the Midwife

Babinden or the Feast of the Midwife is celebrated today in Bulgaria. It's a day to honor midwives, obstetricians, doulas, and all those who assist in the birthing process. While the holiday is now frequently retitled as something like Maternity Day or Day of Maternity Help, it derives from ancient Pagan rituals and was originally intended to honor the grandmothers and older women—the *babas*—who assisted with the home births that were, until recently, the norm in Bulgaria and elsewhere. The word “Baba” (as in the witch Baba Yaga or the clairvoyant Baba Vanga) serves as an honorific for midwives as well as for grandmothers and elderly women.

Midwives were once expected to do more than just assist with the physical aspects of birth. The birthing process is widely believed to attract malicious spiritual forces. A skilled midwife possesses the magical skills and wisdom to keep mother and child safe.

Advance preparations for today's feast involve cooking the feast to be served later and preparing the ritual tea towels that will be given as gifts and used in magical ritual.

Mothers of children younger than three years rise before dawn today to collect fresh water to bring to local midwives, together with new handstitched ritual towels. (For those who would like to replicate this: if you don't need to actually collect the water, there's no need to rise so early. However, if you have access to a well, you may wish to follow these directions, as the water may be more magically charged for the ritual to follow.) Accompanied by the children, water and towels are presented to the midwife. Using these gifts, the midwife ritually washes the children's faces. It's believed that on this day her hands possess increased power to bless. More gifts are given to the midwives, who in turn present gifts and blessings to the babies. Festivities may continue all day and night incorporating feasting, drinking, and dancing.

If you are a midwife, consider what blessings your hands can transmit today.

Midwife Goddesses

It's also the ideal day to celebrate and honor divine midwives, as well: those goddesses who assist with childbirth but also sponsor and protect midwives. This

is true for anyone, but especially for midwives themselves—it's a great day to request their blessings and protection. These goddesses come from around the world and include Artemis, Carmenta, Cihuacoatl, Egeria, Hekate, Kapo, Kybele, Lady Chan, Nephthys, and Taweret.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR

Numerous miracles are attributed to this statue of Mary currently enshrined in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in New Orleans. Since 1928, Our Lady of Prompt Succor has been officially designated as the matron saint of Louisiana and New Orleans, and she is credited with preventing many disasters. In particular, she is invoked to protect against hurricanes. She may be invoked at any time and as need determines, but January 8 is her official feast day and a great day to give thanks for favors received and request her aid in the forthcoming year.

SAINT KING BALTHAZAR

Today is the feast of Saint Balthazar, one of the Three Kings. (See [January 6](#) for more information.) Of the three kings, Balthazar is the most beloved with the greatest following and is often venerated independently. According to legend, Balthazar was the King of Nubia and ruler of Ethiopia. He is traditionally envisioned as an elegant Black man wearing a turban or a crown over a turban. He is associated with the gifts of frankincense and myrrh, and these may be burned for him as an offering.

Balthazar is especially venerated as the patron saint of those of African ancestry, particularly in South America. He is *hugely* popular among the African communities of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, where he is feted with parades, festivals, and musical performances. Saint King Balthazar is also the patron of those who labor with saws and those who manufacture playing cards. He is invoked to heal and prevent epilepsy and other seizure disorders.

GAUCHO GIL

Today is the feast of Gaucho Gil, also called Gauchito Gil, the most popular and famous of Argentina's Gaucho Saints. Gaucho Gil is a folk saint or unofficial saint, not a canonized saint. An extremely charismatic man, Gaucho Gil became a celebrated Robin Hood-like figure who stole from the rich and gave to the

poor. He developed a reputation as a miracle-healer: Gaucho Gil only had to touch an animal to heal it, or so goes his legend.

On January 8, crowds converge on the saint's primary shrine outside the town of Mercedes in Corrientes Province in Argentina; but Gaucho Gil may be venerated in your own home. You may also erect an outdoor or roadside shrine for him. It is customary to dance for Gaucho Gil today, as, in the events leading to his murder, he was arrested at a dance honoring Saint Balthazar. Gauchito Gil is invoked for *everything*: he is an all-purpose saint, fulfilling all his devotees' needs and desires, but is especially associated with driving and travel safety.

Gaucho Gil's iconic color is red, and that color should dominate his altar. Offer him red candles and red wine. It's traditional to light candles dedicated to Gaucho Gil with the wicks facing downward, replicating the position in which he died.

January 9

According to his creator, author J. K. Rowling, Severus Snape celebrates his birthday today. In his honor, let's consider potions, one subject Professor Snape taught at Hogwarts in the *Harry Potter* novel and movie series.

A potion is a magic spell served up as a beverage. Creating a potion does not need to be complicated and difficult. Here are two simple examples that may be combined, if you choose.

A Simple Love Potion

1. With your finger, rub a little honey inside a glass (ideally a beautiful one). You may also write messages *within* the glass using the honey ("Be mine" for instance) or the name or initials of your intended target.
2. Fill the glass with a beverage, whose taste will not clash with the honey.
3. Serve to the target of your spell.

Although potions are very closely associated with love spells—think of the potion that doomed Tristan and Isolde—they may be used for any purpose. The following spell, based on Russian magical techniques, can be adapted to any magical goal. It is intended to encourage the recipient of the potion to do as you

desire.

Do What I Want Potion

1. Focus on your goal. What do you want this potion to accomplish? Give yourself time to boil it down to one concise sentence. For example, “Sign the contract” or “Sell me the car.” This is your incantation.

Tips:

- Be sure that this sentence clearly and accurately expresses what you seek.
 - Sentences should be in the present tense, not the past or future.
 - Your spell is more likely to be successful if the order given is positive, rather than negative. In other words, tell the recipient what *to do* rather than what *not to do*.
2. Pour out a beverage that your recipient will be happy to drink. The more willingly they accept and drink the beverage, the more likely your spell is to work.
 3. Before serving the drink, bring the cup close to your face and discreetly and softly murmur your incantation over it.
 4. Serve to your target.
 - The target of your spell shouldn’t witness your spellcasting. Step 1 may be accomplished well in advance. Step 2 should be done in private: go to the kitchen to pour out the beverage, for example, before bringing it to the recipient waiting in another room.

January 10

There are magic spells intended to terminate harmful relationships. These are not banishing or break-up spells. Instead, their goal is to sever emotional ties that are so deep that the other person may continue to influence you, even if you have no physical contact with them. In the parlance of Hoodoo (North American folk magic), these are known as Cut and Clear spells. They serve to completely

sunder and remove any kind of soul connection between you and your spell's target. Allegedly, once done, these spells cannot be undone, at least if the spell has been cast correctly. These spells may also be able to break romantic binding spells later regretted.

Numerous variations on these spells exist, some more difficult to cast than others. Primary ingredients are walnuts, lemons, and lemon-scented botanicals, such as lemongrass. These spells may be cast at any time and as needed; however, if this is something that has been on your mind, today is an appropriate day, as it is the anniversary of Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon, which has become symbolic of the point of no return. You must be committed to your decision to end the relationship.

Cut and Clear Walnut Bath

1. Fill a pot, ideally a cast-iron one, with spring water.
2. Add one dozen walnuts still in their shells.
3. Set the pot on the stove over medium heat.
4. Once it simmers, adjust the heat to maintain the simmer for three hours, adding more water, if necessary.
5. Remove the pot from the stove and allow the water with the walnuts to cool to room temperature.
6. Save the walnuts but add the liquid to a bath.
7. While you bathe, focus on the goal of your spell. Visualizations may help, or chant something like "Cut and Clear! Cut and Clear! I cut you from my life and clear you from my path."
8. Do not eat or in any way consume the walnuts. They should be buried outside your home, ideally in a cemetery, as this person and your previous relationship are now dead to you. If this is not possible or you must wait to accomplish this, wrap the walnuts in a fabric handkerchief and bury this within a flowerpot containing cacti, rue, or roses. This must be kept outside your home. The closest it can come is the farthest corner of your yard, balcony, or a back window.

January 11

The Carmentalia

The Carmentalia, the Roman feast of the goddess Carmenta, begins today and continues through January 15. Rituals for her are performed on the first and last days of her festival.



Spirits and Saint of the Day

CARMENTA

Today, a “charm” usually means either a lucky talisman or a small piece of jewelry that attaches to a bracelet. The original meaning of the word, however, indicated a magic spell that was cast by singing, speaking, or chanting. Thus, the witches in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, announce “the charm’s wound up” once their spell has concluded.

Carmenta is the original charmer, the Queen of Charms. Her name derives from the same etymological roots. Carmenta is a goddess of magic, prophesy, and midwifery. She protects women in childbirth and is the matron goddess of those who help them give birth. Carmenta is also invoked for academic success, to pass tests, pay for tuition, and to help with admissions to institutions of higher learning. Carmenta is credited with inventing the Latin alphabet.

Today is the best day to invoke or honor Carmenta. Offer her wine, candles, or incense. Carmenta will share altar space with her lover, Hermes. It is forbidden to wear leather when approaching or serving Carmenta.

VITALIS OF GAZA

Today is the Roman Catholic feast of Vitalis of Gaza, who died in 625 CE. The Orthodox Church celebrates him on April 22. Vitalis is the patron saint of day laborers and sex workers.

Legends says that Vitalis, a seventh-century monk from Gaza, traveled to Alexandria when he was sixty. Appalled by the number of prostitutes he witnessed in this great metropolis, Vitalis hired himself out as a day laborer. At

the end of each workday, he would bring his wages to one of these women so that she would not prostitute herself that night.

Vitalis is invoked to protect sex workers and day laborers, especially from occupational hazards. He is also invoked to rescue people from the sex trade. To request favors or offer thanks, light a white candle for Vitalis. Offerings on behalf of organizations that seek to prevent human trafficking are appropriate.

January 12

Crown of Success is a magical formula oil that allegedly helps you achieve success, whether professional, academic, or personal. Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) is the primary ingredient. The name of the oil recalls the laurel wreath that symbolized victory and the highest status in ancient Greece, and is echoed in the modern *baccalaureate*. Crown of Success is among the most useful of the magical formula oils and may be crafted or used at any time. However, as today is Student's Day in many parts of the world, and Crown of Success is so often associated with academic success, today is a prime time to concoct it.

Crown of Success Oil

Bay leaves
Frankincense
Sandalwood
Vetiver

1. Use essential oils or dried botanical material that you pulverize and blend in a mortar and pestle. (And yes, these are the same bay leaves you can buy in the grocery store.) You can combine the two: in other words, you may use essential oil of sandalwood and dried, crumbled bay leaves.
2. Add the botanical material to a bottle filled with sunflower, olive, or jojoba oil (or a blend of these oils.)
3. Cap the bottle and hold it in your left hand while visualizing the success you desire already achieved.

There are numerous ways to use Crown of Success Oil:

- Anoint documents, papers, and exams with a tiny bit of the oil.
- Add a little to your bath.

- Use it to dress candles dedicated to your success.
- Soak cotton balls in it and carry them in your pocket or purse.
- Place a drop on your forehead or hands before interviews and exams.

Saint of the Day: Tatianna of Rome

According to the Vatican canon roll of saints, today is the feast of Saint Tatianna of Rome. (In Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, where she is very popular, Tatianna is celebrated on January 25.) Tatianna, a deaconess, was an early Christian martyr, and is now the matron saint of students, and the feast of Saint Tatianna is sometimes celebrated as Students' Day. It's a day for students to request blessings for themselves but also a day for others (parents, teachers, siblings, friends) to seek blessings on behalf of beloved students. Light a candle for Tatianna, offer her mead, and make charitable donations on behalf of students, would-be students, and the poor. See [January 25](#) for further details and another opportunity to seek Tatianna's blessings.

January 13

January in the Northern Hemisphere is often marked by inclement weather. Roads can be icy and treacherous. Here are some magical travel safety tips:

- Crystals believed to help keep you safe on the road include tiger's eye, staurolite, turquoise, and malachite.
- Plants believed to bring luck to your travels include ash leaves, cats claw thorns, feverfew, pine needles, sweetgrass, and wormwood.

You may carry any of these in your clothing, purse, or pocket. You can also create magical amulets for yourself by adding any combination of these items to a charm bag or large empty matchbox, which will then be kept in your glove compartment. Use holy cards, statuettes, or medallions to incorporate the power of the following spirits and saints who are acclaimed for protecting travelers: Ganesha, Ogun, Saint Christopher, Saint James the Traveler, Dr. Jose Gregorio Hernandez, Durga, Kali, Difunta Correa, Jesus Malverde, Gaucho Gil, Anubis, Isis, and Wepwawet.

These may be augmented by the following magical bath:

Feverfew Travel Safety Bath

In addition to its many therapeutic health benefits, the herb feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) is believed magically able to prevent accidents or at least protect you should they occur.

1. Pour boiling water over dried feverfew to create an infusion.
2. Once this has cooled sufficiently, add it to your bath. You may strain out the botanical material or not, as you please.
3. Bathe prior to undertaking your journey. The infusion may be made in advance and refrigerated, so that it is ready when needed.



January 14

Today is an auspicious day for protection spells. Any spell or ritual you prefer is suitable. Here is a suggestion:

Doll Protection Spell

The goal of this spell is to protect you or someone in your care, such as a child, from someone causing harm, whether physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, or economic. If more than one person exists, each will require an individual doll to represent them. The doll will not injure the target of your spell. Instead it should bind them in order to prevent them from causing further harm. Focus on the desired result of your spell as you craft.

1. Create a doll or puppet from cloth, wax, or other material. For optimum power, incorporate your target's hair, nail clippings, or bodily fluids. If these are not available, or in addition, insert a name paper—a slip of paper

with the target's name written on it. If the person uses multiple names, include each one. The names should be placed *inside* the doll, so as not to be visible.

2. Wrap your dolly in freezer paper and place it in the very back of your freezer. Leave it there indefinitely.

Saint of the Day: Andrésito, the Beggar Saint

Andrés Garcia Acosta (1800–1853) was a mendicant friar, begging for alms in the streets of Santiago, Chile, where he became intimately aware of the travails of the poor. He became a committed social activist, dedicated to improving the lives of prisoners and the oppressed. Andrésito also developed a reputation as a holy man and miracle worker. San Andrésito is the patron saint of the impoverished and those who labor. Numerous miracles are attributed to him. He may be asked for anything. Appropriate offerings are candles, novenas, and actions benefiting the poor.



January 15

Saint of the Day: Saint Ita of Killeedy

Today is the feast of Saint Ita, a fifth-century Irish noblewoman, who persuaded her father to let her adopt a religious avocation. She developed a reputation as a miracle worker that continues today. Her given name was Deirdre—*Ita* derives from the Gaelic for “thirst for holiness.” Legend has it that when Ita was asked what three human characteristics were most despised by God, she responded: a scowling face, obstinance in wrongdoing, and too much confidence in the power of money.

Ita has achieved a great reputation as an intercessor, with her specialties being eye disorders, conception, and pregnancy. To request her intercession,

light a candle for her. Offerings on behalf of Ireland and young students are also appropriate.

Maximum Strength Spiritual Cleansing Bath

Today precedes a couple of days that have historically been associated with tension and disaster. Their focus will be on protection magic. It is always beneficial to precede protection spells with cleansing rituals. This is an excellent time for this particular bath, but it may also be done at any time when you feel tainted or defiled or in need of some super-cleansing.

1. Draw a bath for yourself. Make the water as hot as is comfortable for you.
2. Add heaping handfuls of sea salt to the water, as well as some fresh lemon slices.
3. Create a blend of the following essential oils: frankincense, lavender, myrrh, rose, rosemary, and sandalwood. Add approximately twelve drops of the *blend* (not each essential oil) to the bathwater. (If you're unable to obtain all the essential oils, incorporate what you have.)
4. If you have hydrosol of white rose, add a splash. You may also float rose petals or calendula blossoms in the water, provided that the flowers have not been exposed to pesticides.
5. Immerse yourself in the water.
6. When you've finished bathing, dry yourself with a clean towel and put on fresh clothes.

The Carmentalia

Today is the final day of the Carmentalia, the festival of Carmenta. It is an excellent day to request favors from this goddess of many gifts: Carmenta presides over prophecy, spellcasting, midwifery, and academic success. More details may be found in the entry for the first day of her festival, [January 11](#). Traditionally, rituals for Carmenta are performed on the first and last days of the feast.

January 16

As tomorrow is a day frequently associated with natural disasters, today may be a good day to check preparations. Do you have a good emergency spell? If not, here's one:

Fiery Wall of Protection

Fiery Wall of Protection Oil is believed to provide protection from disasters of all kinds. This is the basic formula:

- ½ ounce castor oil**
- ½ ounce jojoba oil**
- 1 teaspoon powdered dragon's blood (*Dracaena draco*)**
- 1 teaspoon sea salt**
- 5 drops of essential oil of frankincense (*Boswellia carterii*)**
- 5 drops of essential oil of myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)**

1. Blend the castor and jojoba oils. Castor oil possesses protective properties but is extremely thick and viscous. The addition of jojoba oil allows this formula to flow easily and also serves as a preservative, increasing shelf life.
 2. Add the dragon's blood and sea salt to a bottle containing the oils.
 3. Add the essential oils to the bottle.
 4. Cap the bottle and roll it gently to distribute the ingredients.
- You may also add additional drops of essential oils of cinnamon leaf and ginger to the recipe, if you like, but they are not required. Be careful with the cinnamon, as it can burn your skin.
 - Dragon's blood is the name given the resin of a species of tropical palm. Unlike most other resins, it's red, hence its name. Inclusion of dragon's blood is what makes this oil "fiery." Omitting this one ingredient from the recipe results in Wall of Protection Oil, which is also good and can be substituted for, but is not quite as potent as, Fiery Wall.

What do you do with Fiery Wall of Protection? It's an extremely versatile formula. At its simplest, you can soak cotton balls in the oil, which may be carried in purses, pockets, and charm bags, as well as placed in drawers or corners.

Sprinkle the oil or rub it on areas within your home perceived as vulnerable, whether physically or spiritually, typically portals such as thresholds, doorsteps, windowsills, and doorways. Add a splash to a bucket of wash water. Add vinegar or Florida Water (a type of cologne, perceived as having protective and luck-

bringing properties) to the water, too. Use this to wash floors and walls, as well as front steps if you have them.

January 17

Although many, many happy things have also occurred on this date, it is the anniversary of numerous disasters and thus an excellent day for safety prevention, prayer, and offerings to the Creator, ancestors, or whoever you consider your divine guardians. If you do not already have a divine guardian, Archangel Michael and Saint Barbara have long reputations as miraculous protectors against disaster. More information about them can be found in the entries for their respective feast days: September 29 and December 4. However, the protection of Archangel Michael may be summoned easily at any time and any place via this simple invocation.

Invocation of Archangel Michael

Recite the following, whether silently or aloud:

Michael to the right of me.

Michael to the left of me.

Michael before me, Michael behind me,

Michael above me, Michael below me,

Michael within me

Michael all around me.

Michael, with your flaming sword of cobalt blue, protect me [now or today or whatever suits your situation most. Be precise.]

As you repeat the invocation, visualize yourself within a cobalt blue bubble that encompasses you completely, sort of like Glinda's big pink bubble in the MGM movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Hold that image of yourself cradled within Michael's safe zone for a little longer than it takes to say the invocation.

At the end, when you've asked for Michael's protection, you may also ask him to extend that protection to loved ones in need, animals as well as humans. Improvise and repeat as needed.

The authors of the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* consider January 17 to be a

date of special significance because of its persistent reoccurrence in the lore surrounding the mysteries of Rennes-le-Chateau. The implication is that there is an energy inherent in the date that makes it attractive to arcane organizations and especially for reprisals against enemies.

The following spell allegedly helps protect you from the wrath of any enemy. It's a powerful spell that requires the use of not one but two condition oils: Black Cat Oil *and* San Cipriano Oil. These may be purchased from reputable oil vendors, but your own work is always most powerful, as it is permeated with your own fears, hopes, and deepest emotions. The recipes for the formula oils are found beneath the spell instructions:

My Enemy Has No Power Over Me

1. Create a justice candle by scratching your enemy's name into a pillar candle, ideally a brown candle, but a white candle is acceptable, too. You may dress and prepare this candle however you deem best. Set it aside until Step 5.
2. Write your enemy's full name nine times on a piece of brown butcher paper or a piece of paper cut or ripped from a brown paper bag.
3. Repeat the name of this spell nine times, substituting your enemy's name for the words "My Enemy."
 - If you don't know the name, then saying something like "My enemy is powerless over me" suffices.
 - If your enemy has multiple names, then repeat nine times for each name variant.
4. Carefully add nine drops each of Black Cat Oil *and* San Cipriano Oil.
5. Light the candle.
6. Holding the paper with a firesafe tweezer, insert it into the candle flame and burn it.
7. The paper must burn until none of the letters of your enemy's name are legible.
8. When the candle has burned down, gather up the remaining wax and ashes and bury them in a cemetery.

Here are basic recipes for the two oils:

Black Cat Oil

Bay laurel, either a dried leaf or the essential oil

Clary sage, either the essential oil or the dried herb

A base oil(s)

Myrrh, either the essential oil or the resin

A bit of steel wool

Fine iron shot

(If you have a resident black cat, pick a hair off your clothes or furniture to add to the mix. Otherwise, omit.)

1. If using solid herbal materials, grind them together using a mortar and pestle.
2. Place them in a container and cover them with good-quality base oils, such as one or more of the following: castor, jojoba, or olive. If you are not using solid herbal materials, then step 2 is really step 1: add the base oil or blend of base oils to a container.
3. Add the steel wool, fine iron shot, and optional cat hair to the oil.
4. Add the essential oils last, drop by drop, until you've achieved an aroma that pleases you.

San Cipriano Oil

Cinnamon, either the dried spice or its essential oil

Low John (*Trillium erectum*, also known as bethroot)

Myrrh, either the essential oil or the resin may be used

Orris root

A base oil(s)

Essential oil of cedarwood

Essential oil of cypress

1. Using a mortar and pestle, grind all solid materials together.
2. Place them in a container and cover them with good-quality base oils, such as one or more of the following: castor, jojoba, olive, safflower, or sunflower.
3. The final step involves incorporating the essential oils, which should be added drop by drop until the fragrance pleases you.

Saints of the Day: Anthony of Egypt

Today is the feast of Saint Anthony of Egypt, also known as Anthony Abbot, Anthony of the Desert, and Anthony the Great. It's believed that he died on this day in 356. He is *not* the same saint as Anthony of Padua, the witchdoctor saint

who helps locate what's been lost. (For that saint, please see [June 13](#).)

Today's Saint Anthony is considered the father of Christian monasticism and is the prototype of the desert hermit. When he was eighteen, his wealthy parents died. Anthony, their heir, made provisions for his sister and then, taking a vow of poverty, sold all his property, giving the proceeds to the poor. He joined a community of anchorites and moved into an empty crypt. Later, by age thirty-five, he moved to the desert, where he lived alone for the rest of his life, although he did teach and found monasteries.

Anthony's saintly specialties are protecting domestic animals—his emblem is a pig—and healing skin ailments including eczema, psoriasis, shingles, melanomas, and undiagnosed conditions. Basically, if it afflicts the skin, Saint Anthony is the saint to invoke.

Because of his love for solitude, a simple spell invokes Anthony's aid in banishing houseguests who have overstayed their welcome:

1. While holding your broom in your hands, invoke Saint Anthony. Request his blessing and explain what you need.
2. When you've finished, turn the broom upside down and lean it by the back door. (If you have no back door, the front door will do.)
3. Burn a white candle for Saint Anthony and let him know precisely what you will give him if he comes through for you. You can give him a time limit to accomplish his miracle.

Appropriate offerings include candles, water, bread, charitable deeds, and images of pigs. However, if you are requesting a life-saving miracle—your recovery from gangrene or skin cancer, for example—it's customary to promise to visit one of his shrines in Egypt or Italy. If this is impossible for you, major charitable donations on behalf of the poor or toward the maintenance of his shrines are a viable substitute. Do not promise what you cannot fulfill. Saint Anthony is *not* a good-natured saint. He was grouchy in life, and that mood persists in the afterlife. Make sure vows to him are fulfilled in a timely fashion.



January 18

Saints and Spirits of the Day

MARGARET OF HUNGARY

Today is the feast of Saint Margaret of Hungary, who died on this day in 1271. Margaret reputedly has the power to control water, a gift she manifested during her lifetime. Margaret is invoked to protect from storms and floods. She may also be asked to send them. Her emblems are a book and a white lily. To seek her favor, offer her white candles, white lilies, and Hungarian floral embroideries.

SAINT PETER

Although it is not the primary one, today is among Saint Peter's feasts and the first of the calendar year. (For other feasts and more information about the saint, see [June 28](#) and [July 31](#).) Today's feast is known as the Chair of Saint Peter and honors Peter's role as the first bishop of Rome, the first pope, and the Keeper of the Keys. Candles may be lit for the saint, requests made, and vows fulfilled. Peter is considered among the most powerful saints and may be invoked for *any* kind of request or miracle.

PAPA LEGBA

Another keeper of the keys, Papa Legba is such a primordial spirit that he belongs to multiple pantheons of Africa and the Americas and answers to many variations of his name: Eshu Elegbara, Exu, Elegba, Elegua, and Papa La Bas. Papa Legba is a trickster spirit, the guardian of the gates, and the master of the crossroads. There is little he cannot do.

Because Papa Legba has been syncretized to Peter, he may be feted on any of the days sacred to the saint. (Depending on tradition, he may also be syncretized to Anthony of Padua, the Anima Sola, and the Holy Child of Atocha. Days dedicated to them may be used to celebrate Legba instead of or in addition to those associated with Peter.) In the Vodou traditions of Haiti and New Orleans, references to Saint Peter may be intended to reference Legba.

The keys displayed in Peter's votive imagery serve as a link between the two sacred beings, the visual impetus for syncretism. Peter's keys are often crossed, something that Legba's devotees would understand as a reference to crossroads—and thus to Papa Legba. If you find yourself at a crossroad, metaphorical as well as literal, call on Papa Legba to find your best route and direction. (But be careful how you word your requests: remember, he is a trickster.) Offer him rum, candy, cigarettes, and especially candy cigarettes, if you can find them.

January 19

Since today is the birthday of Buffy Summers from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, it's a good day to address repelling vampires.

Folklore advises that garlic repels vampires if worn or hung around the bed. If you are fearful, planting garlic in or around your home may be helpful—the garlic blossoms are believed to be an even more powerful repellant than the easier-to-obtain bulbs.

Psychic vampires may enjoy garlic, rather than be repelled. Crystals may exert a better effect: black tourmaline and labradorite allegedly help create a shield. Garlic flower essence (*not* the essential oil!) helps repel any kind of parasite, whether human or otherwise, and may help repair any damage already done. Unlike fresh or dried garlic, it lacks any scent, so it's more discreet.

Garlic Peppermint Vampire Protection Powder

1. Grind garlic together with dried peppermint leaves, using a mortar and pestle.
2. Cast a circle around vulnerable areas like your bed for maximum protection. The fragrance of peppermint is believed to serve as a repellant.

January 20

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT AGNES

Tomorrow is the feast of Saint Agnes, and thus tonight is Saint Agnes Eve, beginning what is potentially a week dedicated to Agnes. The feast of her friend and ally Saint Emerentiana is celebrated on January 23. A second day is devoted to Agnes on January 28.

Agnes is among the earliest Christian martyrs, believed to have died at the very beginning of the fourth century. (More details are found in the entry for [January 21](#).) Ironically, considering that the impetus for Agnes' murder was her vow never to marry, the eve of her feast is historically associated with romantic

dream divination rituals.

The following rituals can *only* be performed tonight. Choose one. Their goal is identical: receiving a dream vision of your future spouse or your true love, ideally one and the same. For many of us, these are now party games, but not that long ago, a woman's entire future might be determined by who she married or even *if* she married, and so information gathered from spells like these were perceived as invaluable.

The Fast of Saint Agnes

1. Fast all day on January 20, meaning that no food or drink is consumed from the time you awaken. Keep the goal of your spell—to receive Agnes' aid in determining who you will wed or to help you make decisions as to your love life—foremost in your mind.
2. At night, get ready for bed: bathe, put on your night clothing (and if you own something that looks suitable for a romantic Gothic movie, this would be the night to wear it), prepare your bed, but don't get into it yet. The spell has just started.
3. From this point until it's time to intone the incantation, you must maintain total silence—not a peep!
4. Boil an egg until it's hard boiled.
5. When it's ready, cut it in half and remove the yolk. (Traditionally, back in ye olden days, the eggshell would be left on the egg and consumed; however, remember that spells can be adapted, and I leave the decision of whether to peel the egg up to you.)
6. Fill the egg's cavity with salt.
7. Put the two egg halves back together and eat the whole thing.
8. Walk backwards to bed, chanting the following:

*Sweet Saint Agnes, work your fast.
In my dreams, let the spell be cast
If ever I should marry, or someone marry me
I hope this night their face to see.*
9. Once the chant is done, resume silence until you wake in the morning.
10. Get into bed and dream.

11. Don't speak until after you write down your dream or whatever you remember of it.

Saint Agnes Dream Divination

1. This ritual does not require a fast, although you may if you wish. You may also recite the chant from the spell above this one before Step 2. Placing an image of Saint Agnes beneath your pillow may also be helpful.
2. Get into bed and place your hands behind your head. If you can retain this position and also maintain total silence until the morning, your true love will allegedly appear in your dreams, kiss you, and dine with you.

SAINT SEBASTIAN

Today is the feast of Saint Sebastian. A secret Christian, he was a soldier in the Roman army and a special favorite of Emperor Diocletian, who promoted Sebastian to be the captain of his guard. Sebastian is among the great saints, believed capable of performing any miracle. He is invoked for good luck and protection. While alive, Sebastian was considered to be a miraculous healer. He retains this reputation in the afterlife. Among the most popular saints of the Black Plague era, he is now petitioned to protect against any kind of epidemic but is especially invoked to prevent HIV or AIDS or to protect those already infected.

Diocletian took Sebastian's Christianity as a personal betrayal, and rumors have lingered for centuries that this is because they were lovers. Although not official Vatican-approved hagiography, since at least the nineteenth century, Sebastian has served as a significant patron of gay people, who may request his blessings and help with everything, ranging from romance and safety to housing and finances.

Saint Sebastian's attribute or emblem is an arrow. It's customary to display them on his altars to signify his presence and as offerings. You may also light candles and offer him alcoholic beverages. Creative endeavors may also please him.

OCHOSSI

The orisha Ochossi is syncretized to Saint Sebastian, and so today serves as his feast, too. The link between the two sacred beings are the arrows that are emblems for both. Ochossi is typically envisioned as an indigenous American hunter—a handsome long-haired man carrying a bow and arrows and who, like

Sebastian, is not wearing a lot of clothing. Although Ochossi originates in what was the kingdom of Ketu in what is now modern Nigeria, his homeland did not survive the slave trade. Ochossi survives as an orisha in the Americas, where he is venerated by devotees of various African Diaspora traditions.

Ochossi's image as a hunter indicates his ability to provide for his devotees. "Hunting" may be interpreted metaphorically. Ochossi hunts down whatever is needed, ranging from justice to prosperity. He is a great sorcerer, who knows all the secrets of the plant world and thus all the cures. He is petitioned to heal anything that ails you, especially if it defies diagnosis or medical science. Ochossi owns jails, prisons, and wherever people are confined against their will. He is the patron of those in solitary confinement. Ochossi may be petitioned for liberation and protection.

Ochossi's colors are usually brown and lilac. Place arrows, horns, feathers, and animal prints on his altar. Favored offerings include tobacco, roasted corn, roasted peanuts, and trail mix. Stir cornmeal and honey into a glass of milk, or serve him anisette or cachaça.

An Employment Spell

Ochossi may be invoked to help you hunt down a job. Traditionally, as with many spells associated with Ochossi, this ritual is done in a forest. If that is impossible, a tree in a park or even a yard will suffice. And if even that is impossible, then cast the spell inside your home but perhaps make your offering more enticing.

1. Fill a small bowl with honey. The bowl must be biodegradable, such as terra cotta, or at least not polluting, such as cast-iron.
2. Sprinkle some roasted peanuts over the honey or place them beside the bowl.
3. Place seven silver-colored coins around the bowl.
4. Give Ochossi a bottle of liquor, preferably rum or anisette. This can be a small airline-sized bottle, but it must be new. Open the bottle and offer it to him.
5. Speak with Ochossi, humbly, politely, clearly, and concisely explaining who you are and what you seek.
6. If you are already outside, leave the offering where it is and do not go back

for it.

7. If you are within your home, all the items involved in the spell must eventually be placed in a wooded park or forest, including the bowl. (Unless you decide to maintain a permanent altar for Ochossi, in which case the bowl can reside on the altar.)

This spell is recommended today, as it's a day Ochossi is believed to be especially responsive; however, if you don't need this spell at this time, it can be cast at other times, such as the fourth day of each month, as it is sacred to Ochossi.

January 21

Saint of the Day

SAINT AGNES

Saint Agnes is among the earliest Christian martyrs, believed to have died circa 304 during the reign of Emperor Diocletian when she was approximately twelve years old. Agnes may be requested for virtually *anything*, but her specialties are ensuring fidelity and loyalty, romantic or otherwise.

Last night, Saint Agnes Eve, was the night for spells associated with Agnes. Today is considered the ideal time to request Agnes' assistance. She is the matron saint of young women, engaged couples, those who have taken vows of chastity, and those who have been raped. Light candles for her. Give her flowers and gifts that a young girl would like. Saint Agnes has another feast day on January 28.

January 22

Saint of the Day

SAINT VINCENT OF SARAGOSSA

The very first Christian martyr from Spain, Vincent is especially identified with the wine industry and is the patron of anyone associated with wine in any way,

from those who create it to those who sell it or serve it. Today is his feast day. He is an all-purpose saint who may be invoked for any blessing. Light a candle for him and offer him a glass of fine wine. Offerings on behalf of ravens and other corvids are also highly appropriate, as legend has it that after his corpse was thrown into a swamp, a raven swooped down, not to peck at the cadaver, but to stand vigil and guard Vincent until it was safe for his compatriots to collect his body and bury him. A raven is among the saint's primary emblems and messengers.

January 23

Saints of the Day

SAINT EMERENTIANA

Emerentiana was Saint Agnes' milk sister, meaning that they had nursed at the same breasts, as Emerentiana's mother was Agnes' wet nurse and nanny. (See [January 21](#) for information about Agnes.) Four days after the death of Agnes, a crowd discovering Emerentiana weeping and praying at her grave mocked her. Emerentiana, angered and grieving, proclaimed that she, too, was a Christian. The raucous crowd promptly stoned the young girl to death. Emerentiana was buried beside Agnes. The two remain devoted in death, will share an altar, and may be petitioned together.

Emerentiana, although less famous, may be invoked on her own. More than just Agnes' sidekick, Emerentiana has gained her own reputation as a healer of digestive and stomach disorders, ranging from the most minor food allergies to life-threatening illnesses. Emerentiana is envisioned as a young girl holding lilies in her hand and stones in her lap. It is traditional to place rocks and stones on her altar, acknowledging how she died.

SAINT MARIANNE COPE OF MOLOKAI, MOTHER OF OUTCASTS

Although most saints' feast days commemorate their anniversaries of death, today is the anniversary of the birth of Marianne Cope in 1838. A Franciscan nun, early in her career she worked as a teacher and a hospital administrator. In 1883, Sister Marianne responded to a call from King Kalakaua, the Merrie Monarch, seeking volunteers to assist lepers in Hawaii. Initially, she worked in Oahu and in Maui where, by the government's request, she founded the first

general hospital. In 1887, the government ended the forced exile of lepers in Molokai and closed the specialty hospital in Oahu, but Marianne continued to work with the patients as well as their children, who were ostracized because of their associations with the disease.

In death, as in life, she is a healer, invoked for miraculous cures. She is the matron saint of Hawaii, but also of lepers, those suffering from HIV or AIDS, and those who identify as outcasts. Cope is among those saints who, since 2020, have become closely associated with pandemics, especially as her constant mandate to caregivers and patients alike was “Wash your hands!”

January 24

Spirits of the Day

CERES AND TELLUS MATER

Today marks the beginning of the *Sementivae*, a Roman festival honoring Ceres, the Italian grain goddess, and Tellus Mater, literally “Mother Earth,” together. The three-day celebration continues on January 25 and 26. The goddesses are asked to bless and protect seeds and their sowers. Those who work to preserve and distribute seeds may consider themselves under their matronage.

EKEKO

Today is also the first day of the *Alasitas*, an annual month-long festival held throughout Bolivia, Peru, and elsewhere in the Andes. Based on indigenous traditions, the festival honors the deity Ekeko, the Aymara Lord of Abundance and Prosperity. Starting in the 1970s, the very recognizable image of Ekeko began to circulate around the globe. He is envisioned as a smiling man wearing traditional Aymara clothing and bedecked with miniature charms and bags overflowing with goods—in concept, not dissimilar from a cornucopia.

Ekeko wears whatever he is expected to bestow on his devotees: tools, money, food, babies, appliances, and whatever a heart may desire. His image serves as a talisman believed to magnetically attract wealth and fulfill dreams.

Ekeko Statue Ritual

If you have an Ekeko statue or doll, give him a bit of whatever it is that you hope he will bring. Pin small amounts of cash to him, for example, or offer him tiny

doll babies. If he fulfills your desires, maintain him in a favored place in your home. Favored offerings include cigarettes and Coca Cola. And if you don't have an image, find one on the internet, print it out, and attach images of what you seek. Promise Ekeko that if he comes through for you, you'll purchase or create an image of him.

Many, although not all, Ekeko statuettes are crafted so that a cigarette may be inserted. This cigarette then serves as an oracular communication device, as well as an offering:

1. Insert the cigarette and light it.
2. Observe the smoke—if it resembles an actual exhalation, that's a sign that Ekeko has heard your plea.
3. For the sake of fire safety, don't leave the burning cigarette unwatched and unattended. Take this opportunity to further communicate with Ekeko, to convey your requests and gratitude and to ask for his blessing.

January 25

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Burns Night

Tonight is Burns Night, a celebration of the life and poetry of Scots poet Robert Burns and, by extension, of all things Scottish, including Scottish-derived rituals and spells. The date was chosen to commemorate his birth on this day in 1759. It is traditional to celebrate with a Burns Supper, a festive event honoring Burns and his poetry. Gatherings may be informally held in someone's home, but Masonic lodges or Scottish or Burns societies may sponsor formal dinners and dances, as well as virtual events. Expect bagpipers, haggis, whisky, speeches, performances, and recitations of poetry. Witches may wish to celebrate Nannie, the sexy witch dubbed "Cutty Sark," in Burns' poem "Tam O'Shanter," possibly by saluting her with libations of Cutty Sark, the Scotch whisky named in her honor.

Saint of the Day: Saint Dwyinn

Saint Dwyinn is sometimes described as the Saint Valentine of Wales. Today, her feast, is a day associated with romance. Also called Dwyinnwen, legend describes her as a fifth-century Welsh princess who was madly in love. When the relationship didn't work out, she was heartbroken and devastated. She cried so hard that an angel appeared and offered her a potion guaranteed to relieve her distress. She drank it and her former fiancé turned to stone. Dwyinn cried even harder—that wasn't her desired outcome. The angel, who had not anticipated Dwyinn's grief-stricken reaction, offered to grant her three wishes in consolation. Dwyinn made one wish for herself—she wanted to be spared the pangs of love forever; one for her beloved—to be restored to life; and one for the rest of us—all true lovers who invoked her name to either receive their hearts' desires or get over it fast.

Allegedly just invoking her name is sufficient to receive Dwyinn's blessing. Dwyinn is most associated with romance, but she is also credited with miraculous healings of people and animals

Light candles for her and offer her spring water. Donations on behalf of Welsh flora and fauna should also attract favor.

January 26

Mirror Box Protection Spell

Reports of sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) increased exponentially after World War II. The “flying saucer craze,” as it's been called, was a source of fascination for many, but for others it became a source of terror. While some welcomed encounters from extraterrestrials, others wished to avoid them. In addition, many who claimed to have been abducted desperately sought to avoid further experiences. A mirror box is a magical device intended to provide a virtual cloak of invisibility and protect you from prying eyes, human or otherwise. They may be crafted at any time; however, as January 26 is the anniversary of the formal initiation of Project Sign, a US government study of UFOs, doing it today creates a magical attunement.

A mirror box is a small box lined on the inside with mirrors. You may line a preexisting box with mirrors. Alternatively, you can construct a box out of small mirrors. Pharmacies and cosmetic supply shops often sell packs of small mirrors.

The mirrors must face each other inside the box. Make sure the top, bottom, and sides are lined with mirrors—essentially you are creating a miniature hall of mirrors.

If you would like the box to shield you—to effectively create a cloak of protective invisibility—sign your name across the back of a photo of yourself. The size of the photo will depend on the size of your box. Ideally, no one else should be in the photo, unless you are seeking the same type of invisibility for that person or animal, too. Place the photo inside your box. Close the box. You may wrap it with cord or twine to ensure that it stays closed, and place it in a safe, dark place where it will not be disturbed. (This spell may cause you to escape notice in general. Should you find this frustrating or your situation changes, open the box and remove your photo.)

If there is a specific person whose attention you would like to avoid, then place a photo or drawing of that person within the box, rather than a photo of you. If an image is unavailable, write the person's name on a piece of paper and place that within the box instead.

You can embellish this spell by adding protective oils, herbs, and crystals, as desired. For maximum strength, use a box or container crafted from iron or carved from a black crystal, such as black tourmaline or onyx.

January 27

Spirits of the Day

CASTOR AND POLLUX, THE HEAVENLY TWINS

Today marks a feast of Castor and Pollux, commemorating the dedication of their temple in 484 BCE. The pair, who are venerated together, are known as the Dioscuri (Greek for god's boys) or the Gemini.

The brothers loved each other and were inseparable. Whether on Earth or in the heavens, where their image hangs as the constellation Gemini, the brothers are accessible to their devotees. Castor is an equestrian and Pollux is a boxer: they are patrons of athletes in general. Extremely popular deities in Greece and Rome, they are the patrons of soldiers and guardians of those who travel on the sea. Those born under the sign of Gemini or who have the sign prominent in their natal charts can also claim these generous, proactive deities as patrons.

January 28

Saint of the Day

SAINT AGNES

Today is believed to be the birthday of the very popular Saint Agnes. It's celebrated as her secondary feast. Her primary feast is on January 21. Essentially today marks the end of what could be interpreted as a week-long festival of this very early Christian martyr. You may honor Agnes today, as on the 21st, light candles for her and request favors. In addition, because her name, meaning chaste, pure, or holy, resembles the Latin word for lamb (*agnus*), images of lambs and sheep are often given to her.

Agnus Dei Amulet

Agnus Dei literally means “lamb of God” in Latin and usually indicates Jesus. However, the *agnus dei* is also a type of talisman, believed to provide protection and featuring the image of a lamb and a flag.

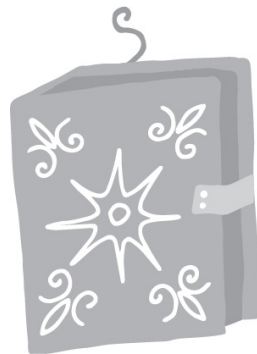
There is an official and authorized method of crafting this amulet, but as with all things magical, unofficial avenues also exist. Agnus dei are treasured and relied upon by devout Christians but also by those who love amulets or those who seek protection regardless of the source. The many blessings provided by the agnus dei are said to include:

- Protection from virtually every danger including poison, Satan, evil spirits, terrible people, false accusations, storms, and natural disasters
- Safe and easy childbirth
- Victory in battle
- Prevention and healing of illness

An agnus dei is a round or oval-shaped wax disc that has been imprinted with the image of a lamb and a flag. They are blessed by the pope and consecrated only during a pope's first year in office and then every seventh year after. The wax comes from the remains of the previous year's Easter candles gathered from Rome's churches and melted inside a large cauldron. Among the oldest known Christian amulets—some scholars would say the oldest—they date

back to at least the sixth century and are believed to be an adaptation of earlier Pagan talismans.

Consecrated wax discs or bits of them may also be placed within wooden or metal containers or sewn within fabric, not dissimilar in style to a sachet or mojo hand. Although it is the ritual of consecration that ostensibly fuels the amulet, many believe it's the image itself that transmits the power, and so the lamb-and-flag image is also found on medallions, holy cards, and fabric charms. Often beautifully sewn and intricately hand embroidered, these are crafted as acts of devotion. Agnus dei of all kinds, antique and modern, official and unofficial, are easily purchased online.



January 29

The Blackbird Days

Today marks the first of the Blackbird Days (*i giorni della merla*), an Italian tradition marking the last three days of January. These three days are considered harbingers: their weather is believed to forecast what one can expect from the year to come.

- If these days are particularly cold, this indicates that spring will be beautiful, warm, and early.
- If these days are unseasonably warm, expect spring to be delayed.

These days are also believed sacred to the goddess Juno in several of her aspects.

- Juno Februata is the presiding goddess over the new month soon to come. She is associated with romance, fertility, purification rituals, and the Lupercalia festival that begins in only a few weeks.
- Juno Lucina, or Juno the Lightbringer, protector of pregnant women, who guides the baby from the darkness of the birth canal into the light of life.
- Juno Sospita (Juno the Defender), or Juno Salvatrice (Juno the Savior), is the warrior Mother of Rome, who continues to defend her children. Her feast is on February 1, and if you are a fan or perceive yourself as her constituent, it is not too early to start preparations. Juno Sospita's sacred bird is the crow.

Saint of the Day

BLATH OF KILDARE

Today marks the feast of Saint Blath of Kildare, who is also sometimes called Saint Flora, as her Gaelic name means “flower.” Blath may be understood as preparing the way for the upcoming feast of her friend Saint Brigid. Blath served as the cook at Brigid's convent at Kildare. Saint Brigid may have miraculously provided a never-ending supply of food, but it was Blath who cooked it. Reputedly bread and bacon prepared by Blath was the best ever. The two saints may be venerated together, friends in death, as in life. However, Blath may also be invoked independently. She is the matron saint of those who cook for organizations including schools, places of worship, and soup kitchens, and especially of cooks who volunteer their services to feed the needy.

January 30

Day of Saudade (*Dia da Saudade*)

There is no direct one-word English translation for the Portuguese word *saudade*. It is sometimes described as “longing,” but *saudade* is a very specific kind of longing, often a longing for something that no longer exists or can no longer be obtained. It is deeper, more profound, and potentially painful than “nostalgia” and a very specific kind of “melancholy.” The Portuguese historian Duarte Nunes de Leão defined *saudade* as “memory of something with a desire for it.”

This Portuguese word has existed, or at least been documented, since the thirteenth century. *Saudade* simultaneously encompasses love, yearning, and loss. Saudade also names a genre of music that expresses and sometimes celebrates this emotion.

Today is a good day to come to terms with losses and to celebrate your past or your ancestors or homelands lost. If remembrances of loss have crippled you, lilac flower essence may be beneficial.

Today is also the second of the three Blackbird Days. Please see [January 29](#) for details.

January 31

Today marks the last day of January. It is the last of the three Blackbird Days. Please see [January 29](#) for details.

Remember to say “Rabbit” when you awake tomorrow. See the “[Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!](#)” entry for details.

February Eve

Tonight is the magical night variously called February Eve, Brigid’s Eve, the Eve of Saint Brigid, or Imbolc Eve. At its most primordial roots, it derives from an ancient Celtic fire festival. The goddess Brigid, an incredibly versatile spirit, is associated with fire and water. Her name may be translated as “Fiery Arrow” and her epithets include *The Ashless Flame* and the *Moon-Crowned Queen of the Undying Flame*. Fire features in many of her myths and legends. More information about this complex sacred being, both goddess and saint, is found in the entry for [February 1](#).

Brigid Eve

Brigid walks the earth on Imbolc Eve and is believed to visit the households of her devotees tonight, proffering blessings and responding to pleas and invocations. Leave a handkerchief or other small fabric item outside overnight on a window ledge so that Brigid can bless and empower it for you. Each member of the household should have their own cloth. Bring them inside in the

morning. Do not wash or launder this talisman but preserve it.

It's customary to place a cake or some sort of baked item on the windowsill overnight as an offering. If you do so, bring it inside in the morning (assuming it's still there). Don't eat it. Preserve it as a talisman or feed it to one of Brigid's sacred creatures, as an additional offering. Her creatures include cattle, pigs, snakes, geese, and swans. It's also traditional to leave offerings of grass on the doorstep overnight for the cows who accompany Brigid on her journeys.

Brigid Doll

The *Brideog* is the name given to handcrafted images representing Brigid that should be crafted today or tonight. These effigies, also called "the Biddy" or the "little Bride" or the "doll Bride," are woven from rushes, sheaves of wheat, or similar botanical material and then embellished with flowers, ribbons, seashells, pretty pebbles, or other ornaments.

It's also customary to craft a bed for the doll. Once everything is complete, open the front door and officially welcome Brigid. Beckon for her to enter and then place the dolly in the bed overnight. Some like to stay up all night, visiting with the doll and the spirit of the goddess.

Brigid's Cross

Brigid's crosses may be crafted at any time, but those crafted tonight are believed especially infused with Brigid's blessings. Made solely from botanical material, these crosses are twisted and tied. Traditionally crafted from rushes, they are now also made from sheaves of wheat, corn husks, or straw. (If you do have access to rushes, they must be pulled up, *not* cut). The cross is woven from left to right. (Detailed instructions may be found online or in my book, *Encyclopedia of Mystics, Saints, and Sages*.) The completed cross will be placed above the door as a protective amulet and left there until it's replaced with a new one next February Eve.

Christian legend suggests that Saint Brigid invented these amulets herself, twisting rushes into emblems of Christianity, to keep her hands from idleness, while sitting beside sickbeds. However, the shape is much more ancient. A school of thought suggests that the spiral invokes the North Star and the pattern made by the Big Dipper over the course of the year.



February

The origins of February's name are a bit murkier than those of the months it's sandwiched between. January and March unambiguously honor deities Janus and Mars. February derives from the Latin word *februum* meaning "purification." A related word *februa* refers to Roman rites of purification and the instruments used to perform them. These instruments included salt, spelt grain, and the strips of goat skin incorporated into Lupercalia rituals celebrated this month.

Although February is the second month of our modern calendar, it was once the last month of the Roman year, a time for banishing anything that defiles us or that no longer works for us in preparation for a new, better year to come. February's energy is excellent for any sort of magical cleansing and clearing, although simultaneously and perhaps paradoxically it is also associated with Dionysian energies involving celebratory excess. February is traditionally a month of anticipation, as well as of unbridled sexy romance.

February's name does honor a deity, but it references a specific aspect or path of this goddess. Her importance is indicated by the fact that she is the only Roman deity honored with two months named for her. The month of February was a late addition to the calendar. By the time it was officially incorporated, June had already been named for Juno. February honors Juno in her aspect of *Juno Februa* or *Juno Februata*, meaning Juno who Purifies or Juno Who Burns with the Fever of Love.

Although specific dates are dedicated to her this month and throughout the year, Juno presides over the entire month of February and may be invoked for blessings and assistance. She is a goddess of protection whose sacraments include marriage and childbirth. Juno bears a reputation as a profound healer, able to assist with any illness or disability, but her specialty is what were once known as "women's illnesses"—anything having to do with breasts and reproductive organs. She is also believed to give sound financial advice. Appropriate offerings for Juno include flowers, especially roses and irises, peacock feathers, Italian wines and mineral water, and images of her sacred creatures: goats, wolves, lions, geese, peacocks, and snakes.

Angels of February: Barbiel and Barchiel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Aquarius and Pisces

Bird of the Month: indigo bunting, parrot

Birthstone of the Month: amethyst

Flowers of the Month: iris, primrose, violet, and snowdrop, also known as the “fair maid of February”

February’s Holidays and Extra Power Days

Imbolc: February 1 or 2

Candlemas: February 2

Valentine’s Day: February 14

Lupercalia: February 15

Leap Day: February 29

Moveable Feasts

Imbolc: depending on personal tradition, the fixed date of this holiday is February 1 or 2, but in ancient days it was calculated astronomically to fall at the midpoint between the winter solstice and the vernal equinox, typically sometime during the first week of February. Some modern practitioners prefer to celebrate the old way.

Lunar New Year or Chinese New Year coincides with the second new moon following the winter solstice, corresponding with the new moon in Aquarius.

February 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Candlemas Eve

Tonight is Candlemas Eve, the night preceding tomorrow’s holiday. In some traditions, the Christmas period officially terminates today, and some believe

that if Christmas decorations aren't taken down before nightfall, dreadful things will happen to the inhabitants of the house. In days of old, bonfires were lit tonight, but these have largely been replaced with candles. A fire in the hearth may also substitute. Any sort of spells, magic, or divination involving fire is appropriate.

Pyromancy

Pyromancy means “fire divination,” and the simplest method involves gazing into the flames. Essentially you are substituting flames for a crystal ball. Candle flame may be used, but so can bonfires, hearthfires, and fire pits. Sit comfortably facing the flames. (It goes without saying that a safe distance should be maintained.) Relax your mind and gaze. Look at the fire. Pay attention both to what you see and to thoughts that appear, seemingly unbidden.

Imbolc and Oimele

The festival of Imbolc, also known as Oimele, has been celebrated in Ireland since at least the Neolithic era.

- *Imbolc* derives from Irish Gaelic and is translated as “in the belly,” usually interpreted as referencing the pregnancy of ewes.
- *Oimele*, also deriving from Irish Gaelic, is translated as “ewe’s milk” or “butter bag.”

As its name indicates, the holiday celebrates and coincides with Ireland’s traditional lambing season. It is also intrinsically associated with the fiery goddess Brigid, whose feast is also celebrated today. On Imbolc, Brigid collects the kindling for the fire that will precipitate spring.

Imbolc is one of pre-Christian Ireland’s four major fire festivals. (The others are Beltane, Lughnasadh, and Samhain.) The ancients may not have distinguished Imbolc from Brigid’s feast. However, Imbolc now also names a modern Wiccan sabbat. Many modern practitioners celebrate the date as part of the ever-turning Wheel of the Year and as a herald of spring without necessarily associating it with sheep or Brigid beyond any historical aspects.

Spirits and Saints of the Day

THE BRIGIDS: GODDESS, SAINT, AND LWA

Brigid (goddess)

Today is the feast of the goddess Brigid. An ancient goddess (and not all of them are), she remains extremely popular. Brigid's roots may derive from a Celtic or pre-Celtic deity whose name may be etymologically related to the Celtic tribe, the Brigantes, as well as to "Britain."

Brigid has demonstrated a talent for reemerging in new forms or avatars. In her most famous guise, Brigid is identified as a member of the Tuatha Dé Danaan (the spirits who would evolve into the Sidhe or fairies). She is a great goddess of fire and water, poetry, artisanry, smithcraft, healing, midwifery, fertility, music, and prophesy. Brigid presides over livestock, brewing, wisdom, and learning. She is a goddess of civilization and technology, ancient and modern. A very beloved goddess, she is believed capable of performing virtually any miracle.

Today is her primary feast day. It's a great day to celebrate and honor her, as well as for requesting and repaying favors. Traditional offerings include blackberries, ale, and candles. Brigid is a goddess of artisans, and handcrafted gifts are especially valued, including newly composed poetry, needlework, home-brewed beer, or home-baked bread.

Saint Brigid

Today is also the feast of Saint Brigid. It can be extremely difficult to distinguish Saint Brigid and goddess Brigid: they are incredibly similar with the exception of their votive imagery. Saint Brigid is envisioned as a nun. Whether Saint Brigid is simply a sanctified version of the goddess or a distinct being has long been passionately debated.

February 1 is the day that Saint Brigid is believed to have been born and died. A busy and beloved saint, she has a *huge* constituency. As matron saint of midwives and newborn babies, she is invoked for protection and success when women go into labor. She is also the matron of blacksmiths, poets, cattle farmers and those who work with dairy in any way, those who keep poultry, sailors, scholars, travelers, those whose fathers mistreat their mothers, and those whose parents were unwed. Saint Brigid accepts the same offerings as the goddess Brigid, as well as good deeds and charitable donations. Light candles in her honor.

It's believed especially auspicious and lucky to hear a linnet singing today.

Madame Brigitte, Queen of the Cemetery

Brigid traveled to Haiti alongside her devotees, Irish and Scots indentured servants. In Haiti, she transformed and evolved into a Vodou lwa, and found a husband, Baron Samedi, ruler of the cemetery. Sacred Vodou songs recall Brigitte's origins in Scotland. She goes by the French variant of her name and is addressed by the honorifics "Maman" or "Madame."

In Haiti, her interests became narrower and more specific: Madame Brigitte is a spirit of life and death, fertility and the cemetery. She is invoked for justice, especially when not otherwise forthcoming. Her specialties are healing, especially for terminally ill children, and prosperity, especially when cash is desperately needed.

Haitians transported Madame Brigitte to New Orleans, where she transformed yet again into Mother Bridget, a beloved spirit of New Orleans Voodoo, who is invoked for protection and justice. She is honored and invoked similarly to Madame Brigitte.

Brigitte may be venerated alone or together with her husband. Their primary feast day is November 2, the Day of the Dead. She is not syncretized to Saint Brigid but to Mary Magdalene, who is often portrayed with a skull. Madame Brigitte is believed to reside in cemetery trees, especially elms and willows. Decorate home altars for her with rocks from the cemetery or use them to construct the altar. (Make sure you do not take what belongs to the dead or cemetery-residing spirits or at least not without permission. Leave payment and offerings in the form of libations and coins whenever something is taken.) Traditional offerings for Madame Brigitte include black coffee, overproof rum, red wine, and purple flowers including irises and violets.

Juno Sospita

Today is the feast of Juno Sospita: Juno the Savior or Defender and Mother of Rome. Formerly the goddess of the Latin settlement at Lanivium (also spelled Lanuvium), approximately twenty miles south of Rome, she was officially incorporated into the Roman pantheon in 338 BCE, after the Romans conquered the Latins, an Italian tribe. This is Juno in her warrior aspect. Her identifying symbols are a lance and a shield. Her bird is a crow, that inhabitant of the battlefield. Juno protects those in the military, as well as those of military age, regardless of whether they are actually in the military. You may also request her assistance with your own personal battles.

February 2

Some celebrate Imbolc and Saint Brigid today. Please see [February 1](#) for details.

Candlemas

Today is Candlemas, also called the Feast of the Purification of Mary and the Feast of Mary of the Candles. This Christian holiday acknowledges the Jewish identity of Jesus and his family. The date is based on the account in the Gospel of Luke 2: 22–40 in which Jesus, as a first-born son, is presented at the Jerusalem Temple on the thirty-third day after his circumcision, which, according to Jewish law, occurs on the eighth day after birth, barring unusual circumstances.

However, this is also a holiday with deep Pagan roots. During the Church's earliest days, the spiritual use of candles was discouraged and sometimes forbidden, as they were so closely associated with the rites of Isis. Pope Gelasius I promoted Candlemas in order to help fill the void caused when he banished the Lupercalia in 496. (See [February 15](#).)

Today is a day to light candles and create joyful, bright light. Torchlit processions were once a popular feature. Many bring candles to church to be blessed, which some believe activates extra magical properties. These candles are believed to protect against illness and spiritual dangers. They are lit for the dying to light their way or simply placed unlit into their hands to provide comfort.

The holiday was celebrated in rural Scotland with fire oracles: wheels were set on fire and rolled down hills. If the wheel reached the bottom still burning

brightly, this was perceived as a positive omen, indicating the good fortune of the person who set the wheel rolling. If the wheel rolled off-course or the flames went out midway, this was interpreted as a harbinger of trouble.

It is traditional to make or eat crepes today. Round, golden brown pancakes are believed to invigorate the sun, helping it return to full strength. Various pancake-related folk rituals exist. For example, holding a gold coin or medallion in your left hand while flipping the pancake with the right is believed to ensure prosperity until next year's Candlemas. (Lefties may reverse hands; however, it's possible that the left hand clutches the coin because it's considered the magical hand, not because it's assumed that the pancake flipper is right-handed.)

Candlemas is a weather oracle. An old rhyme advises:

*If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain
Winter will not come again.*

In other words, if the weather today is beautiful, it won't last. Expect a return of harsh winter. However, if today is rainy or overcast, spring should be on its way shortly.

Sailors were once wary of beginning voyages on Candlemas Day, as superstition suggests that journeys initiated today will end unhappily.

For many, today marks the conclusion of the Christmas season and the deadline for removing all lingering Christmas decorations.

Groundhog Day

Groundhog Day is a weather oracle deriving from Candlemas and Pennsylvania Dutch traditions. When German-speaking regions of Europe became Protestant, Candlemas was no longer observed as a religious holiday, but its weather oracle survived. It was believed that if badgers emerge from their burrows today, but then retreat back into hibernation, there will be another six weeks of winter weather. If the badger does not retreat, spring is imminent.

Immigrants to the US brought the tradition with them. Lacking badgers, groundhogs became the oracular creature of choice. However, this is no longer a happenstance sighting of the creature. Annually on this day, a groundhog dubbed Punxsutawney Phil is roused from his burrow in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Legend says that if Phil sees his shadow and is frightened by it, he will return to his burrow, signaling six more weeks of winter. If Phil remains outside, spring

weather is imminent.

Spirits and Saints of the Day

BLAISE

Tonight is Saint Blaise Eve, as his feast is tomorrow. It was once traditional in England to light bonfires, perhaps because the saint's name is a homonym for "blaze." If Blaise has helped you previously or if you seek his assistance for his specialties—healing of mouth and throat disorders including teeth, as well as protection and healing of animals—then light a bonfire, hearth fire, or candles in his honor. Details regarding the saint are found on [February 3](#). If you have frozen a slice of Christmas panettone to eat tomorrow, remember to take it out of the freezer in time for it to defrost.

THE BLACK MADONNA OF CANDELARIA

Today is a feast of the Black Madonna of Candelaria, who is also celebrated on August 15. In 1390, Guanche shepherds discovered a mysterious statue on the beach at Tenerife in the Canary Islands. (The Guanche are the indigenous people of the Canaries.) They understood the image of a dark woman holding a baby in one hand and a candle in the other (hence "Candelaria") to be a goddess, perhaps Chaxiraxi, a Guanche deity. A shrine was created for her, from whence she quickly began to produce miracles. Fifty years later, a Guanche convert to Christianity re-identified the statue as Mary.

Celebrations commence on the evening of February 1 with a candlelight procession. There is literally no miracle that Candelaria is believed incapable of producing.

CANDELINA

The metresa Candelina, a member of the 21 Divisions pantheon of the Dominican Republic, is a benevolent, generous spirit, albeit one possessing a tempestuous nature. She protects and guides her devotees. As she is syncretized to the Black Madonna of Candelaria, today is her feast. Light candles in her honor. Her color is scarlet. Offer her tubes of red lipstick or fine perfume packaged in red bottles, such as Dior's *Hypnotic Poison*. Candelina drinks red wine or hibiscus tea. She is the special guardian of infants, especially newborns. Today is considered the best day of the year to seek her blessings for them.

OYA

As she is syncretized to the Black Madonna of Candelaria, by extension this is also a feast of the orisha Oya, spirit of storms, winds, and hurricanes. She protects against natural disasters including lightning, tornadoes, and flooding. The presiding spirit of the Niger River, Oya is a warrior and a brilliant strategist. The Queen of the Marketplace, she is the special guardian of female shopkeepers and entrepreneurs, as well as librarians. Those who work in cemeteries and funeral homes may also consider themselves already under her matronage.

Oya is a healer invoked against lung diseases, infertility, and chronic miscarriage. She presides over necromancy and is the guardian of the cemetery. If someone has died recently and you fear that they will haunt you or work against you from beyond the grave, Oya may be invoked for protection and prevention. Offerings to her may be placed at the gates of a cemetery or on a home altar. Her sacred creature is a water buffalo and her altars are traditionally ornamented with horns. Her colors include maroon, aubergine, purple, and dark red. Offer her fruits and vegetables in those colors, such as grapes, plums, or eggplant. Oya drinks red wine.

OUR LADY OF SEAFARERS

Our Lady of Seafarers, also called Our Lady of Navigators, is a title bestowed upon Mary, Mother of Jesus, invoking her aid for those who travel over the water, whether professionally or occasionally. This aspect of Mary is especially popular in Brazil, where today is an official holiday. Traditionally, images are ritually cleansed or brought to the beach or harbor. Offerings include flowers, especially white roses; incense; gifts evoking sea travel, such as anchors or rudders; and appropriate charitable donations.

YEMAYA

In Brazil, this powerful orisha is syncretized to Mary, Our Lady of Seafarers, and so this is a day of celebration for her, as well. (The Portuguese variant of her name is Iemanjá.) Bring offerings to the beach or celebrate her at a personal altar. Those who bring offerings to the beach typically actually deposit the items in the water. (Make sure they are biodegradable and will not pollute the waters or harm any sea creatures.) If unable to reach the beach, offerings may be offered at a river with a request to carry it to the sea. Yemaya's ally Oshun, Spirit of the River (her daughter or sister), may be invoked to deliver the offerings, as rivers run to the sea. However, offerings may also simply be given at home.

Appropriate gifts include white flowers, especially roses; wet, seedy fruits

like pomegranates or watermelons; and coconut cake or pastries. Yemaya likes cosmetics, as well, especially scented soap.

February 3

Setsubun

Setsubun, a holiday marking the final day before the official start of spring in the traditional Japanese calendar, was once determined by the lunar calendar, but is now celebrated annually on February 3. Setsubun literally means “seasonal division” and is a component of the Japanese *Haru Matsuri* or Spring Festival. Setsubun is the threshold to spring, and thresholds are exceptionally magically potent yet simultaneously vulnerable. It’s believed that spirits draw especially close. Their proximity is potentially dangerous, yet, precisely because they are near, this also provides an ideal opportunity for banishing those that are harmful, such as disease spirits. Setsubun rituals have evolved to remove lingering malicious spirits and prevent their presence in the new season to come. Another name for this holiday is the Bean-Throwing Ceremony, and rituals include:

- *Fuku mame* (“fortune beans”; roasted edamame or soybeans) are thrown out the front door, which is then slammed shut.
- Alternatively, a member of the household wearing the mask of an oni (pre-Buddhist spirits of Japan, frequently malicious) becomes the target of the beans.

Traditionally the head of the household tosses the beans, after holding them in his hand while praying at the family shrine. Alternatively, the ritual may be done by the eldest member of the family born in the current year of the Chinese zodiac. (These are old customs, and ritual leaders are often stipulated to be male.) This is intended to purify the household and remove dangerous spirits. Although it’s a household ritual, ceremonies are also held at Buddhist and Shinto shrines throughout Japan. Afterwards, it’s customary to eat roasted edamame, one for each year of your life, plus another for good luck, to ensure happiness in the new season and year ahead.

Saint of the Day

SAINT BLAISE

An early Christian martyred circa 316, Saint Blaise was the Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia and a physician; today is his feast.

Blaise is renowned for healing humans and animals alike. Blaise saved a young boy choking on a fishbone. All he did was touch the boy's throat and the fishbone was instantly disgorged. Although Blaise can potentially heal any disorder, his specialties are those involving the mouth and throat, ranging from sore throats and toothache to cancer, speech impediments, and issues with swallowing.

The Blessing of the Throat ritual is held in many churches today. Two long taper candles are blessed, tied together to form an X, and lit. A priest then gently touches these to the throats of those seeking Blaise's blessings. Animals are also blessed in some churches today. Offerings and invocations may be made at home. Light candles for Blaise.

Saint Blaise's Day is traditionally a holiday for animals, especially beasts of burden. It's considered very unlucky to force an animal to labor today. Blaise was extremely concerned about the well-being of animals and objected to hunting as sport. Legend suggests that local hunters, sick of his interference, betrayed him to authorities as a Christian. Blaise then spent time hiding in mountain caves, where wolves and bears protected him and birds brought him food. Offerings to Blaise on behalf of the safety and well-being of animals are appropriate.

You can serve as Blaise's proxy. Allegedly, Blaise will remove obstructions from the body at any time (not just on his feast) if you grasp the afflicted body part with two hands, look straight at the obstruction, and firmly intone: "Holy Saint Blaise commands you to come forth!" You can use this technique on yourself or on someone else: for example, a child with a splinter in the foot.

Saint Blaise Water

Some churches create Saint Blaise Water today—water that has been blessed in the saint's name or touched to his relics—which is believed to possess the power to heal animals, as well as human throat disorders. Rain falling today is believed to contain Blaise's essence and power. Bottle it and save. Today's snow and ice

can similarly be preserved—let it melt before bottling. If you have access to a well or other natural source of potable water, gather it today in Blaise's name to access his power. Light a candle or make an offering to him in exchange.

If you have saved a slice of panettone from Christmas, remember to eat it today—this ritual allegedly prevents sore throats for the rest of the year.

February 4

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Photographs may be incorporated into spells for virtually every purpose. As today is the feast of Saint Veronica, it's also an excellent day for photo spells. Here is a sampling of spells for various purposes.

Photo Cleansing Spell

This spell is intended to provide spiritual cleansing should you feel defiled after being betrayed or abused by someone you know. It is also intended to cut any emotional cords that attach you to this person. The photo in this spell will be destroyed, so use a copy or one you will not regret losing.

1. You need a photo of the person who has left you feeling tainted.
2. Place this photo in a shallow dish filled with salt water.
3. Remove it from the water and allow the photo to dry completely. The salt water may be flushed down the toilet.
4. Once the photo is dry, place it atop a bed of dried sage in a fireproof container, such as an iron cauldron or pyrex dish. (Kitchen sage may be used, or deconstruct a dried herb bundle.) Dried wormwood leaves may be added to the sage, if you like, for a stronger spell, but do not add dried rosemary, lavender, or mugwort, frequent components of commercially packaged herb bundles.
5. Burn the photo together with the sage. Stay with it while it burns for fire safety, but also to exert your presence and will over the process.
6. Once it has been reduced to ashes, place them in a container that closes

tightly. Carry the ashes to a crossroads, where they can be released to the winds. Return home via a circuitous route without looking back. Take a cleansing bath, and your spell is complete.

Under My Foot Domination Spell

This spell is intended to force someone to do your will, particularly in courtroom scenarios where you are dependent on their testimony. (However, depending on your level of anger and rage, this is also potentially a revenge spell. Consider whether you are justified in casting the spell before doing so.)

1. You will need a small photo of the target of your spell, passport-sized ideally; trim or crop as necessary. Face and eyes must be visible. No one else should be in the photo, not even animals.
2. Write the target's name in small print across the back of the photo.
3. Turn the photo a quarter turn and then write your own name over the other name, saying (with determination) "I cross you and I cover you. Do my bidding."
4. Write what you want the person to do or say in one brief, succinct sentence. For example, "Testify on my behalf" or "Go away and never return." You need to be able to boil your goal down to one sentence, even if your desires are complex. Take your time, until you are comfortable with the phrase.
5. Put this photo, face side up, inside your left shoe, so that you metaphorically trample or subjugate this person, imposing your will.

Photo Visualization Portal

Visualization is a powerful and extremely accessible spellcasting technique. Although related to dream-work, it's much easier to exert control over a waking visualization. Visualizations are used to access other realms and contact spirits, but also to help manifest your desires into reality.

The steps themselves are simple: you will need some privacy and a space where you feel safe and relaxed. Now envision yourself embarking on a journey—literally "see" yourself in your mind's eye. Pay attention to your appearance and apparel. It's a *visualization*: if you're unhappy with any aspect, adjust it so that it pleases you. See yourself reaching your destination and accomplishing

what you sought to do, whether it's communing with a favorite goddess, contacting a loved one (living or dead), or visualizing the successful end result of any spell. Make sure to watch yourself return to your starting point before terminating the visualization.

Photos may be incorporated into a vision board intended to serve as a portal to the destination of your visualization. You may use images of yourself or others, destinations, or objects. For example, if your visualization incorporates a journey through a forest or to the sea, attach a photograph that sparks your magic to a board. Decorate as desired. For extra protection, attach amulets, photos of amulets, or of sacred imagery of angels and guardian spirits. You can continually update a visualization board or create a new one for each journey.

To use it, relax and gaze directly into it as you begin your visualization. Then close your eyes and continue. You can also create visualization boards to help ground you on your return from your spirit journey: photos of loved ones, your home, or any kind of touchstone can produce this effect.

Saint of the Day

SAINT VERONICA

As Jesus carried his cross toward Golgotha, the site of his crucifixion, a woman stepped from the crowd lining what is now Jerusalem's Via Dolorosa. With her veil, she wiped the sweat, blood, and mud from Jesus' face. Later, when she glanced at her veil, she discovered the face of Jesus magically and permanently imprinted there. That veil is now known as the *vera icon* ("true image"), and the woman is Saint Veronica. Both veil and saint are mysterious and controversial. Today is Veronica's feast.

Saint Veronica may be invoked for any blessing, but especially healing. She is also the matron saint of photographers and laundry workers. Light candles or incense in her honor.

February 5

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT AGATHA

Saint Agatha's primary shrine in Catania, Italy is the subject of a week-long celebration beginning around February 1, but today is the day of the actual feast. Among the most ancient and powerful saints, Agatha is a particularly goddess-like saint. Her martyrdom was especially brutal and her torture extremely sexualized: she was raped, tortured, and sent to labor in a brothel prior to her death. During her ordeal, her torturers sliced Agatha's breasts from her torso. Her severed breasts are now Agatha's primary votive image. She is portrayed carrying them on a tray. These breasts were later mistaken for bells, and Agatha is now the matron saint of bell makers, bell collectors, bell ringers, or anyone who has anything significant to do with bells. Bells are also among Agatha's votive images and may be used to decorate her altars. Her other votive imagery includes fire tongs and a brazier filled with smoking coals, ostensibly alluding to the instruments used to torture Agatha, but also smith-crafting tools, such as those associated with the smith deity Hephaestus, whose forge lies within Sicily's volcanic Mount Etna. Agatha is now the Lady of the Volcano, which is under her direct protection.

She is also invoked for protection against any kind of natural disaster, as well as from fire. Agatha can reputedly heal any kind of breast disorder, minor or major, from breast-feeding issues to cancer. She is invoked to heal infertility, aid with conception, and provide justice for victims of rape and torture.

Agatha is also closely associated with snakes and is believed to have power over them. Some perceive that an ancient Sicilian snake goddess hides behind the mask of the saint. The name Agatha means "good" and derives from the same etymological roots as *Agathos*, an ancient and benevolent snake deity, once popular in Sicily and elsewhere. Agatha's goddess associations don't end there. Some believe that she is really Aetna, the presiding goddess of the volcano in disguise, while others insist that it's Demeter or Isis hiding behind the mask of the saint.

Traditional offerings for Agatha include candles, red and white carnations, primroses, bells, and images of snakes. If she has performed a true miracle for you—healing cancer, for example—a visit to her shrine may be in order, if possible. In Sicily, as well as in Italian bakeries worldwide, special breast-shaped pastries are baked in her honor.

Folk tradition recommends drinking Holy Water today to keep you safe from snakes until next February 5, when the ritual can be repeated. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for Holy Water for information and options.



February 6

Saint of the Day

DOROTHY OF CAESARIA

Today is the feast of Dorothy of Caesaria, said to have been martyred on this winter day in 311. As Dorothy, a young Christian girl, was being executed in Caesaria (now Kayseri, Turkey), a man in the crowd—a lawyer—heckled her, telling her to send him some fruits and flowers from Heaven. Shortly after Dorothy's death, a mysterious child appeared at the lawyer's home bearing a gift. Wrapped in what turned out to be Dorothy's veil were three beautiful apples and three fragrant, fresh roses, completely out of season. The lawyer promptly converted to Christianity (ending up martyred, as well), and Dorothy's reputation as a saint was sealed.

Dorothy is associated with fruit and flowers and all who work with them: gardeners, florists, flower arrangers, perfumers, aromatherapists. She is also the matron saint of brides, newlyweds, midwives, and brewers. Dorothy is envisioned as a beautiful young woman, crowned with stars or roses and carrying a basket of roses. She may or may not be veiled. The gifts she sent to that lawyer are reproduced in offerings to her: three apples and three roses, plus a candle in her memory. If constructing an altar for her, you may wish to cover it with a veil or shawl rather than a standard altar cloth.

Dorothy is identified as the saint of fruit trees in the same manner that Francis is the saint of animals. Dorothy cares for and protects the trees. If you are in a climate where this is possible, today is a good day to plant or purchase fruit trees. Trees are traditionally blessed today. Request Dorothy's blessings upon them. Images of Dorothy may be placed within gardens to safeguard all within.

February 7

The power of the blank slate or canvas is often intimidating. It is not difficult to feel creative impulses or to envision creative projects in our heads, but acts of creation themselves can be incredibly daunting, be they literary, artistic, musical, or otherwise. Luckily there are magical tools and spiritual helpers to assist.

Crystals are among the easiest to access magical creativity boosters. Specific crystals are believed able to remove creative blocks and unlock the gates of inspiration. These crystals may be worn as jewelry. Alternatively, hold one or more in your hand or place on your forehead slightly above where your brows meet, while you meditate or sit silently, clearing your mind, so that inspiration can flow. You can also carry them in charm bags or display them in your home, however, for maximum effect, the crystals should actually have contact with your skin.

Orange-colored crystals, such as citrine, are considered especially beneficial for this purpose, as they are linked with the second (sacral) chakra, believed to be a seat of creativity. Other helpful crystals include quartz, selenite, and bumblebee (fumarole) jasper.

Spirits who serve as guardians of creative folk and who may be requested to help provide inspiration include Artemis, Athena, Brigid, Odin, Sarasvati, and the Aztec deities, Xochiquetzal and Xochipilli, renowned for breaking artist blocks.

February 8

Storm Spells

Today is the birthday of the late actor, Jack Lemmon, born on this day in 1925. Among his early roles, he portrayed mischievous, bongo-playing witch Nicky Holroyd in the 1958 film *Bell, Book, and Candle*. Various spells are depicted and discussed in the movie, but while it's strongly implied that its heroine has magically raised thunderstorms, her methodology is not shown. Witches have long been associated with raising and calming storms. Let's consider some traditional methods.

RAISE SOME WINDS

This old spell allegedly gives you control over winds. It sounds simpler than it is; the intensity of your desire, focus, and will is what drives this spell to success.

1. Make knots in a cord incorporating the number 3: you can have three knots or nine knots (3×3) or even twenty-seven knots (3×9). Come up with your own number, providing its basis is 3.
2. Focus your intent as you tie the knots. Visualize yourself tying up the winds.
3. Save the knotted cord to use as needed.
4. When you require wind, untie one knot (or the first series of knots) for a breeze. Untie two knots (or two series of knots) for a strong wind. Untie all of them to release a gale force.
5. To make it stop or to use the cord again, repeat steps 1 and 2.

KNOT STORM SAFETY SPELL

1. Make twenty-one (3×7) knots in a cord or rope, focusing on your desire for safety, well-being, and calm weather.
2. Place the rope in the rafters of your home (or the highest possible point).
3. In case of drought or if you ever need some rain, loosen one or two knots.

Saint of the Day

BAKHITA

Bakhita was born in Darfur in western Sudan in approximately 1869. When she was about seven years old, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery by the same traders who had stolen her sister one year earlier. During her captivity, Bakhita was beaten, branded, tattooed, and tortured. One slavemaster made 114 cuts in Bakhita's flesh and then poured salt into them. She was bought and sold, changing households several times. She eventually found herself caring for a young girl in Venice, who attended a school run by the Canossian Sisters. The Sisters were kind to her, and Bakhita became intrigued by Catholicism. Today is her feast day.

Saint Bakhita is the matron saint of those who have been enslaved or

trafficked. She may be requested to help rescue those in bondage and to provide for them in all ways afterward, whether in terms of healing trauma and physical ailments or practical needs such as money and housing. She may be invoked to assist those in situations where they are unable to make spiritual or religious decisions for themselves. Since her death, Bakhita has also developed a reputation for performing miracles of healing. Candles, incense, and flowers are appropriate offerings for Bakhita, but good deeds and donations on behalf of those who have been trafficked and the prevention of slavery are probably most meaningful to her.

February 9

Saint of the Day

APOLLONIA

If you have a history of dental issues or anticipate having them, developing a relationship with Apollonia may be in order, and today is the ideal day to begin, as it is her feast. If she has already helped you, today is the perfect time to light a candle in her memory and recall her excruciating demise.

Apollonia was a street preacher and deaconess in Alexandria, Egypt, a city renowned for its volatility and ethnic and religious conflicts. In approximately 249, a Pagan mob attacked a group of Christians including Apollonia. During the altercation, Apollonia was clubbed in the face, breaking her teeth, or, alternatively, her teeth were plucked out with pincers as a mode of torture. In either case, this was merely a prelude: Apollonia was either pushed into a bonfire where she was burned alive or alternatively jumped into the bonfire rather than abjure her faith, as her captors insisted. With her last words, Apollonia vowed that anyone who recalled her pain, suffering, and death would never be afflicted with dental pain. She has been keeping that promise ever since. Apollonia is invoked to help in all matters of dental health and, as many, including this author, will attest, can miraculously ease dental pain. Apollonia is also the matron saint of anyone who works with teeth, ranging from dentists, dental technicians, and hygienists to creators of dentures and teething tonics.

Apollonia's emblem is a tooth, either pictured alone or held in pincers. Offerings for Apollonia include candles, dental tools, and teeth: your own or those of creatures who shed them, like sharks and alligators. Contributions on

behalf of those who need dentistry but can't afford it are also appropriate.



February 10

Ghost Summoning Spell

Reputedly burning the following dried herbs together or in any combination summons ghosts while simultaneously providing protection for the living.

Amaranth flowers (*Amaranthus spp.*)

Dittany of Crete (*Origanum dictamnus*)

Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*)

This incense may be burned whenever desired but may be especially beneficial when using Ouija or other spirit boards.

February 11

Saints of the Day

BERNADETTE

On this day in 1858, fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous experienced the first of eighteen visions of what she described as a “petite young lady” at the grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes, France, now among the most significant

pilgrimage sites on Earth. See [February 18](#), Bernadette's primary feast day, for more information. Today is a secondary feast: Bernadette may be petitioned for assistance with healing and visionary experiences.

GOBNAIT

Today is the feast of Gobnait, a Celtic well saint from Ireland, who may have pre-Christian roots. Gobnait is the matron saint of bees. Her votive imagery depicts her standing atop a beehive surrounded by bees. She is thus the matron saint of beekeepers, apitherapists, and anyone having anything significant to do with bees. (See [here](#) for more about bees and Honey Jar spells). If you are allergic to them, Gobnait can help protect you and keep them away. Perhaps because her own name is not biblical enough, Gobnait is sometimes called Saint Deborah, as that name means "bee" in Hebrew.

Light beeswax candles for Gobnait. Offer her gifts of honey and images of her sacred creature. Create a bee garden. Offerings on behalf of bees and beekeepers will likely also be appreciated.

February 12

Saints and Spirits of the Day

JULIAN THE HOSPITALLER

Julian the Hospitaller is the patron saint of travelers, especially pilgrims and musicians on the road, innkeepers, those who are hospitable, those who work in hospitality industries, clowns, mimes, jugglers, and carnies, as well as those who are childless, and, not least, murderers and those inadvertently responsible for the loss of lives. Today, his feast day, is the ideal time to seek his favor. The appropriate offering is to give charity today, even in very small amounts, to whoever needs it. This may be done by going outside and giving handouts to whoever asks or by responding to internet or television requests for aid.

Julian is a great healer, believed able to provide miracle cures. However, his specialty is more prosaic. Invoke Saint Julian when all lodgings are sold out and you desperately need someplace to stay. Ask him to find you safe, acceptable shelter. If he comes through for you, light a candle for him and make a donation in his honor on behalf of the poor, needy, and homeless.

VELES

Veles is a beloved Slavic deity. (Depending on region, his name may also be spelled Volos, Vlas, or variants.) A magician and a sorcerer, he is the lord of cattle and wolves, negotiating the balance between them. Veles is a shapeshifter who frequently appears as a horned, bearded old man or as a snake or a dragon. He is a lord of wealth, which he distributes as he pleases.

Today marks his ancient Pagan feast. Today, Veles breaks the horns of winter, allowing spring to gradually emerge. He heals illnesses and bestows the fortitude needed to survive the remaining cold months. This time of the year was perceived as being the threshold before spring and also of the new year inaugurated by the vernal equinox. As a threshold, it's a time of both hope and danger, characterized by chaotic, anarchic energies. Veles is invoked for protection and to maintain order. He disempowers disease demons and other malicious spirits. Because he maintains the balance between livestock and predators, Veles can keep wolves from the door, both literally and metaphorically, in a way that is satisfying and safe for all. Devotees abstain from beef today in honor of Veles. Instead, cattle are given treats and a vacation day.

Even after Paganism was banned, Veles was too beloved to be forgotten. In some regions, he was syncretized to Saint Blaise, and today may be celebrated as a feast of that saint, too. (Please see [February 3](#).) In Russia, Saint Vlasii is the patron saint of cattle and other livestock. Icons showing him surrounded by cows and sheep are placed in barns and stables to keep their inhabitants safe and healthy.

Cattle herders, lovers and guardians of wolves, snake charmers, as well as merchants and travelers may consider themselves under Veles' sphere of protection and favor.

February 13

Tonight is Saint Valentine's Eve and is considered especially beneficial for any sort of romantic spells and divination.

Dream Divination Powder

1. Grind dried mugwort together with dried bay leaves in a mortar and pestle. Crumble away the bay leaves' sharp points, if you can.

2. Burn this blend as incense before bedtime. For fire safety, be absolutely sure the charcoal has stopped smoldering before you go to sleep, as this can be deceptive.
3. Alternatively, or in addition, place the dried, blended herbs into a dream pillow or small packet to place beneath your pillow as you sleep. You should see your true love or receive needed romantic advice in your dreams.

The Parentalia

Today is the first day of the Parentalia, the nine-day Roman festival dedicated to honoring and propitiating direct biological ancestors. According to Roman poet Ovid, people brought flower garlands, wine-soaked bread, and violets to the tombs of their ancestors, where they would also sprinkle salt and wheat as offerings. Akin to current Day of the Dead festivities, the Romans brought food for themselves, too, picnicking near tombs and sharing bread and wine with the shades of beloved ancestors. These practices may be emulated today. The Parentalia concludes with the Feralia, celebrated on February 21.

Saint of the Day

AGABUS

Agabus is a comparatively little-known saint perhaps because of the nature of his constituency. Agabus is the patron saint of diviners, fortune-tellers, prophets, prognosticators, and seers. Today is his feast day, and if you are among his constituents or would like to be, this is the perfect day to honor him and seek his aid. This candle spell intended to improve a fortune-teller's business is best cast today but may also be cast whenever needed.

Saint Agabus Better Business Candle Spell

1. Dedicate a candle to Saint Agabus. His colors are traditionally purple or white, so those would be the ideal colors for the candle.
2. Focus on what you seek from the saint: is it more or steadier income? Better clientele? More renown? Hold the candle in both hands while you ponder.
3. Once you're sure you know what you need, light the candle.

4. Place something representing your trade beside the candle, whether tarot card or crystal ball or other object of divination. If you're a clairvoyant, use an image of a mystic eye. Be creative.
5. You can give Agabus a time frame to deliver help. Tell him what you will do in his honor should he come through for you: lighting candles in his honor, offerings on behalf of the poor, or even donating a reading in his honor to someone who can't otherwise afford it are all appropriate offerings.

If you're not a fortune-teller but would like to adapt this spell for yourself, direct it toward a saint or spirit who you identify as a spiritual matron or patron. Use an object that represents your own career or desires.



February 14

Valentine's Day

Today is Valentine's Day, a day devoted to love and romance. It's customary to give and receive gifts from those you love, especially cards, chocolate, and roses. It's a popular day for engagements and weddings, too. (And potentially a very auspicious date, as it's among those associated with Juno, the goddess of marriage.)

Superficially, the name refers to Saint Valentine, a Christian saint about whom nothing is known, other than his name and his burial on February 14 in Rome. Valentine was among the saints removed from the calendar roll of saints in 1969 for lack of sufficient historical evidence of their existence.

This is, however, a Christian gloss over vestigial remnants of an especially ancient and beloved Roman holiday, the Lupercalia. (Please see the entry for [February 15](#)). The Lupercalia is associated with wild energies intended to encourage sex and reproduction. Valentine's Day is traditionally more sedate, although Lupercalian energies tend to creep in. You may notice that the stylized

heart shape that is the traditional emblem of Valentine's Day and that serves as shorthand for "love" does not resemble an anatomical heart. The shape is believed to derive from representations of the vulva or of "heart-shaped" buttocks, considered the epitome of beauty during Roman times. (A competing theory suggests that the heart shape derives from the shape of the fig leaves used to cover the genitalia on ancient naked Pagan statuary and images.)

Valentine's Day is an excellent day for any kind of love spell. Love spells sometimes give people pause for concern, as hypothetically they may impinge upon someone else's will. The simplest, most straightforward, and ethical love spell lacks a specific target.

Send Me Someone to Love

This spell is best cast under the moonlight or at least when it's dark, whether in the wee hours after midnight or after sunset. The only ingredient is a single candle—any kind of candle may be used, but a simple white or red votive candle is preferable.

1. While holding the candle in your left hand, gaze up at the moon or pick a star in the sky.
2. Focus on your desire to love and be loved.
3. Ask the universe or the higher power of your choice to send the right person to you quickly—someone whose love will bring you joy and for whom you can do the same. Don't name people or visualize anyone in particular. Even if you're sure you know the absolute right person, maybe the universe knows there's someone even better out there for you.
4. Light the candle and let it burn completely.
5. If music or poetry helps you cast a spell successfully, as it does for many, then incorporating Percy Mayfield's song "Please Send Me Someone to Love" or its lyrics may be beneficial.

This is a very flexible spell that is easily adapted. As the candle must burn without being put out and relit, it's better to use a smaller candle—a votive or even a taper—than a large, more elaborate one. However, if you prefer a larger candle, adapt as you feel best. And if this is a very spontaneous spell and you lack candles, omit it, and put all your energy into steps 2 and 3. Feel free to direct your petition to a specific guardian spirit or angel. Pay attention to your

dreams afterward.

Saint of the Day

SAINT TRIFON

In Bulgaria, February 14 is the feast of Trifon Zarezan, patron saint of winegrowers, winemakers, and all who work with vineyards or wine. Trifon may or may not be a manifestation of Dionysus, Lord of Vineyards. Wine is a popular base for love potions, and so it's easy to magically combine the two festivities in a romantic spell.

Wine Love Potion

1. Start with a bottle of wine that you and the object of your affection will enjoy drinking.
2. Steep any or all of the following ingredients in the wine to create an aphrodisiac potion: apple slices, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, damiana, ginger root, grains of paradise, hibiscus, lemon or orange peel, pink peppercorns, rose hips, saffron, and vanilla. Make sure you like the flavor, as otherwise it will dampen or even kill the aphrodisiac effect.
3. After it has steeped for at least an hour, strain the solid materials from the wine and serve to the one you love in a beautiful glass.

February 15

The Lupercalia

Today is the first day of the Lupercalia, a nine-day festival. It was also known as the *dies Februat*—the “februated” or purified day—and some believe that this festival and the ritual tools associated with it are what inspired this entire month’s name. Once an incredibly important festival, it was perhaps the oldest in the Roman region. When the old lunar calendar was in use, the fifteenth day or the ides of February would have corresponded to the full moon in February, the last full moon of the ancient calendar year. The name Lupercalia derives from

lupus, meaning “wolf.” According to legend, the Lupercalia honors the wolf who rescued the babies Romulus and Remus, sons of Mars, who would grow up to be the founders of Rome.

Although Pagan temples had already been shuttered and rituals banned by the Church beginning in 381, the Lupercalia was so beloved and crucial that it lingered. Attempts to terminate it were resisted. Christians as well as Pagans participated, much to the chagrin of the Church. It was only in 496 that Pope Gelasius I succeeded in banning the Lupercalia. Within months, he instituted a feast of Saint Valentine to be held on February 14, the eve of the Lupercalia.

The Lupercalia is ancient: its practices, rituals, intentions, and even length shifted and evolved over the centuries. Festival goals included purification of location and populace, as well as the release and stimulation of good health and fertility, plus banishing and repelling evil spirits and toxic energies. Rituals were held to encourage barren women to conceive.

If you are a lover of deities Faunus, Juno, or Mars, this is an excellent day to venerate them. If wolves are your animal allies, then this is an especially fortuitous day to honor them and work on their behalf. However, today is an especially powerful day that is conducive for *anyone* to cast spells for fertility, safe childbirth, spiritual cleansing, and unblocking. *Any* fertility, childbirth, cleaning, and unblocking spell will be enhanced by today’s energy, but here are some specific suggestions.

Fig Fertility Spell

The *figa* or “fig hand” names a hand gesture and the amulet inspired by it. The hand gesture—making a fist and then pushing your thumb between your first two fingers—mimics sexual intercourse. The ancients perceived that this gesture radiated positive powers of creativity and channeled the protection of the ancestors. The fig hand counteracts the Evil Eye, banishes ghosts, and promotes fertility in both men and women. An amulet depicting the gesture can be worn as a pendant to provide constant protective and generative energy. Fig hands remain popular amulets and are created from many materials—carved from gold, silver, wood, and various crystals and gemstones. However, it’s called a “fig” hand for a reason.

Fig trees were perceived as radiating generative fertility power, both male and female. The milky latex produced by the tree was believed to resemble semen, as well as breast milk. The fruit of the fig tree contains countless seeds indicating its associations with healthy fertility. Figs have also been perceived as

resembling vulvas or ovaries.

An ideal fig hand would be carved from fig wood and consecrated under tonight's moon or the closest full moon. If carving wood is beyond your capacity, shape one from wax. It's not necessary for it to be a perfect artistic rendition. Wear or carry in a charm bag.

Unblocking Spell

The Romans believed that good health and fertility could be blocked and thus prevented from being at their peak power. Among its other functions, the Lupercalia served to remove those blocks, releasing healthy, positive, creative energies. The concept of "blocking" exists among modern occultists, too, although virtually anything can be blocked—success, happiness, creativity, as in "writer's block." The term "unblocking" derives from Hoodoo. You'll know if you're blocked, because somehow nothing goes right. Although you may approach success, somehow your desires never manifest or come true.

Various reasons exist for blocks:

- The Evil Eye, the malicious debilitating result of envy and jealousy
- A curse or hex
- Sometimes blocks just happen—some people are prone to them in the manner that some pieces of furniture accumulate more dust than others.

Blocks can be ritually removed. Today is an excellent time, but this may be done at any time, and if you are someone prone to blocks, perhaps unblocking should be scheduled on a regular basis.

SIMPLE CROSSROADS UNBLOCKING SPELL

1. Bring a libation and bread to a crossroads. (The libation may be water or any other liquid, alcoholic or otherwise. A small piece of bread is sufficient if trying to be inconspicuous.)
2. If it's safe to stand in the center of the crossroads—the point of power—do so; otherwise stand wherever you deem best.
3. Petition the spirits of the crossroads to remove the magical or spiritual blocks to your success and happiness. You can be specific with them.

4. Leave the bread and libation as an offering to them.
5. Leave by a circuitous route without looking back.

Spirit of the Day

FAUNUS

Faunus, also known as Lupercal, is a primordial horned spirit from Italy, the spirit of wild, irrepressible, unconstrained male generative energy, and if you think that sounds a little scary, you are correct. He may manifest as a horned man draped in a wolf-skin or as half-man, half-goat, with the nether regions being the goat part.

Often mistaken for the more famous Pan, Faunus is a distinct spirit who does not play musical instruments. Nor does he speak. Faunus is so ancient, he is from a time before speech—he communicates via sounds, noises, and howls. He is not a spirit for the faint of heart. However, his epithet is “the benefactor” and he is a benevolent protector, although completely lacking in niceties and politeness. He can be very effective but there is nothing gentle about him. Faunus epitomizes the wild god. He is at the heart of the Lupercalia—its days reflect his energy.

Faunus is invoked for oracles, protection, and fertility. Ancient Italians once slept in his grove, seeking his gift of prophetic dreams. Faunus’ sacred animals are goats and wolves. He is the mediator between them. He may be invoked to protect livestock from wolves but also to protect wolves from people. Faunus is most famous for bestowing fertility, however.

Faunus is most likely to manifest in violent or disturbing dreams. These dreams might be characterized as nightmares, but their effect is intended to be beneficial. Merely being in Faunus’ presence is believed to regenerate fertility. Faunus slaps women with leather straps or tree branches to repair fertility. If he doesn’t hit you in a dream, hold up your hands, palms up, so that he will. (This may require a little experience with lucid dreaming but can be accomplished.)

If Faunus fulfills your petitions to him, actions on behalf of the well-being of wolves are appropriate offerings, especially Italian wolves, once prolific but now endangered. Attempts to preserve wild nature in general may be appreciated. Beyond perhaps a single glass of Italian wine, don’t give him alcohol—he’s uncontrollable enough without it. Water is sufficient. There is no need to maintain a permanent altar, although you might consider one for his daughter, Fauna, as well as honoring him on future Lupercalias and his other feast day,

December 5. (Please see [December 4](#) for more information regarding Fauna.)

February 16

It's a great day to charge and consecrate amulets that protect pregnancies. These may include amber beads and evil eye beads, as well as ankhs, Eyes of Horus, and triangle- and diamond-shaped charms. However, any amulet that you have or prefer would benefit from today's energies. If you can expose it to moonlight, all the better, but at a minimum, hold the amulet in your hand. Close your eyes and focus on the happiest possible outcome you seek or can envision. Hold that picture in your mind for at least one minute. Then release it into the atmosphere. You can also burn a candle to your preferred spiritual guardian—it's Saint Juliana's day, but you may work with whoever you wish. (The goddess Hekate would be a Pagan recommendation.) Place the amulet beside the candle so that it absorbs the power and energy.

Saint of the Day

SAINT JULIANA

Like the more famous George and Martha, Juliana is among the dragon saints. She is inevitably portrayed accompanied by a dragon. Her other emblem is a large cauldron. Juliana may have been killed alongside another more famous saint, Barbara, and the two will share an altar together. There are several saints by this name; this one is Juliana of Nicomedia. Juliana's specialty is healing reproductive issues, bestowing fertility, protection during childbirth, and relatively pain-free labor. Although she may be petitioned at any time, today is her feast day.

Juliana serves as a sacred midwife who will assist through every stage of reproduction from helping regulate cycles and hormones through safe, easy childbirth and beyond. If you seek a relationship with her, it may be beneficial to set up a permanent altar for her. Traditional offerings include images of dragons, cauldrons, and chains crafted from fine metals, such as silver or gold. Burn candles and incense for Juliana in three-legged cast-iron cauldrons.

February 17

Today is an excellent day for protection magic. Here is a recipe for a basic protection oil. If crafted today, it will be imbued with the day's essence. If you already have Protection Oil—this or another formula—it's an excellent day to use it or perhaps renew it by charging or blessing.

- Rub it on a candle before lighting (on the wax, *not* the wick). Focus on protection for yourself, your home, loved ones, or whatever you seek.
- Add a drop to charm bags, crystals, and amulets (assuming that this will not damage them).
- Rub a bit on steering wheels or elsewhere in a vehicle to encourage travel safety.

Protection Oil

Benzoin
Black Pepper
Ground Cinnamon
Dragon's Blood
Galangal (laos) root
Dried, ground peppermint
Dried rue
Dried Vervain
Dried ground vetiver
Base oils (castor, sunflower, and jojoba)

1. Grind any combination of these together in a mortar and pestle.
2. If you prefer essential oils to dried herbs, feel free to substitute—you can use a combination of the two, as well.
3. Focus on your goals, desires, and intentions while grinding the herbs.
4. Place them in a container and cover them with a blend of castor oil, sunflower oil, and jojoba oil.
5. Add a pinch of salt and stir or shake gently.

Safety Warnings

- If using essential oil of cinnamon, be very careful not to get it on your hands, as it can burn and raise welts. Do not touch your eyes or other sensitive parts of the body.

- If you are pregnant or trying to conceive, do not use rue or have any contact with it, in this spell or otherwise, as it can stimulate miscarriage.

February 18

Today is an excellent day for all manner of healing spells and rituals. It's also a good day for exercises that encourage clairvoyance and other extrasensory skills. The *Artemisia* family of plants are renowned for stimulating and provoking visionary experiences, a gift from the lunar goddess Artemis after whom these plants are named. These plants include mugwort, wormwood, tarragon, and desert sage (*Artemisia tridentate*), which despite its folk name is a member of the *Artemisia* family, not the *Salvia* (the true sages). They may be burned as incense or brewed into teas. However, the safest way to use these plants may be to incorporate them into a charm bag or dream pillow that may be placed beneath your head while you sleep.

In addition to promoting clairvoyance, these plants are also potentially menstrual regulators that can stimulate uterine contractions. Do not consume if pregnant or seeking to conceive. Essential oils from these plants should never be used, except under direct medical supervision. Essential oil of wormwood should *never* be used, as it can cause kidney failure. A glass of fine-quality absinthe—the liquor incorporating wormwood that is now legal virtually everywhere—or a dried wormwood root used talismanically are safer.

Saint of the Day

SAINT BERNADETTE

Marie-Bernarde Soubirous, now famous as Saint Bernadette, was a young peasant girl in the French Pyrenees when she first witnessed the apparition that changed her life and put Lourdes on the map. The eldest of six children from an extremely poor family, she had eighteen visionary experiences during a five-month period beginning February 11, 1858. She saw what she described as “a beautiful lady” who instructed that a shrine be built for her. The apparition also revealed the location of the healing spring that is now Lourdes to Bernadette, who dug through the mud with her own hands to expose the waters.

Today is Bernadette's primary feast. She is invoked for healing from any kind of illness and especially from disorders that cause chronic pain. Bernadette

is also invoked to protect against poverty. She is matron saint of those ridiculed for their spiritual experiences or piety as well as those with chronic illnesses. She, herself, was in poor health for most of her brief life, suffering from asthma and tuberculosis. While alive, she enjoyed a glass of white wine, and it remains an appropriate offering for her, as are candles or incense.

February 19

If you have not already done so recently, today is an excellent opportunity to cleanse and refresh your altars. (And if today is inconvenient, nearby days are highly suitable, as well.) Altars serve various purposes but primarily:

- To honor a sacred being or divinity
- As a component of a magic spell or ritual
- As a focal point for veneration
- As a visual expression of your spiritual journey

Altars may be temporary, meaning that there are plans to disassemble them within days or weeks, or they may be permanent, meaning that no plans exist to disassemble them. Every aspect of an altar is deliberate; nothing is random, ranging from the location of the altar to its covering to the items upon it. Altars, also sometimes called offering tables or other names, can take many forms. The most minimal is a small tableau on a car dashboard. Larger, more intricate ones may be created on any flat surface, such as a shelf. The most elaborate Vodou altars, such as those dedicated to the beautiful spirit Ezili Freda Dahomey, may take up entire rooms. Altars may be out in the open for everyone to see or they may be private, kept within cabinets or closets, such as those for Ogun, masterful spirit of iron. As with Ogun, sometimes this is the spirit's preference, but often this depends on the safety and needs of the person creating the altar. Every altar is potentially unique.

Unless tended on a consistent schedule, permanent altars tend to become musty and dusty and their energies can become stagnant. Cleansing your altar involves disassembling it carefully, cleansing the space and objects, and then reassembling it. It's an opportunity to recharge and reconsecrate items, if desired. The act of cleansing is a ritual unto itself. Here are some suggestions,

although feel free to work with whatever practices and rituals are most suited for you. Encourage your love for your altar to radiate as you do the following:

1. Carefully disassemble the altar by removing all objects and any fabric covering that lies beneath them. It's best if you can accomplish the entire ritual in one day, keeping all items close together, so that they don't accidentally become lost or scattered. Clearly, a small altar can be cleansed much quicker than an elaborate, highly detailed one.
2. If your altar is on a furniture surface, this is your opportunity to cleanse it, physically as well as spiritually. Polish wooden surfaces; wipe down tiles; do whatever is appropriate.
3. Once it's physically clean, you may spiritually cleanse, either by wafting incense around the space or by sprinkling it with Florida Water or other magically charged waters. Method of cleansing should complement the purpose of your altar but also not cause damage. For example, you might use some form of lavender to cleanse an altar dedicated to Hekate, as it is among her sacred plants. If you are working with a wooden surface, oils or smoke are preferable to water.
4. Allow the space to dry and then begin to reassemble the altar. You may wish to add a new altar cloth, or you may wish to clean the existing one. Cleanse items, one by one, as you place them back on the altar. Remove any dust. Consider whether it's beneficial to rearrange items or place them back exactly as before.
5. Once this is complete, bless your altar and request that any sacred beings represented bless you, your loved ones, and your space. If the altar serves a goal-driven purpose, it may be reiterated now.

February 20

Swan Goddesses

Among the most primeval spirits, swan goddesses emerged in northern latitudes. Spirits of life and death, many are psychopomps—those spirits who serve as divine escorts to the afterlife. Swan goddesses control fertility and the migrations of birds. They provide wealth and good fortune. Spirits classified as swan

goddesses include Aphrodite, Brigid, Kaltes, the Valkyries, and the Vila.

To invite a swan goddess or swan goddesses to fly into your life, set up an altar featuring images of the birds and eggs. Read the folktales and fairytales in which they linger and sing songs inspired by them, such as the folk song “Polly Von.” Sleeves that fall below the fingers are believed to evoke their power and may be used as ritual garb. Efforts on behalf of swans, many of whom are highly endangered species, and their habitats may gain you favor. Although this may be done at any time, today is ideal as it is the anniversary of the 1877 premiere of Tchaikovsky’s ballet *Swan Lake*, which was based on Russian and German folklore.

February 21

Today’s focus is on the relationship between the living and the dead. It’s an auspicious time to visit loved ones in the cemetery and tend their graves. It’s also an excellent day for mediumship and any kind of necromancy. That word can have an ominous ring, evoking tomb raiders and grave desecration. In fact, necromancy simply means divination by the dead—any sort of deliberate, conscious contact with ghosts or dead souls, especially if seeking information, can be classified as necromancy, including séances and Ouija boards.

Numerous techniques, spells, and rituals exist. Here are some simple methods to summon the dead.

Dittany of Crete

Dittany of Crete (*Origanum dictanamus*) is an herb, named for a Greek goddess, that is believed to invite the presence of the dead and will also encourage communication. The dried herb is ground and powdered, so that it can be burned as incense. Keep an eye on the smoke, as allegedly you’ll be able see an image of the deceased.

- If inside, sprinkle a little powdered Dittany of Crete on a charcoal within an incense burner.
- If your ritual is outside, greater quantities of Dittany of Crete may be used: use a fire-safe cast-iron cauldron.

Summoning the dead assumes that they wish to appear. However, dead souls are sometimes grumpy when awakened, even those who loved you dearly while alive. To sweeten their mood, just in case, keep an uncovered dish of honey nearby.

Spirit Water

Uncovered glasses and bowls filled with spring water are believed to invite and appease the thirsty dead. Keep the vessel uncovered and the water fresh. To make it even more appealing, add a splash of anisette liqueur (*Anis del Mono*, for instance, or Sambuca). This combination of two liquids is known as Spirit Water and is believed to be extra inviting.

The Feralia

The Feralia, celebrated today, is a Roman festival of the dead, specifically the Manes. Roman cosmology organized spirits of the dead into different categories. Originally the benevolent dead, “Manes” evolved into a looser term, encompassing cemetery and tomb spirit guardians, as well. Although the Manes are benevolent, the Romans perceived that they needed constant, consistent propitiation in order to keep them that way. The following offering should keep your benevolent dead satisfied and good natured. For those who live or work in a haunted house, this offering should appease all but the most troublesome ghosts.

Place bouquets of roses, a pitcher of milk, an uncorked bottle of wine, or some eggs in a basket filled with dried beans on a table dedicated to the household spirits. Refresh as needed, disposing of the items afterward. Do not consume or use them.

The Parentalia

Today is the final day of the Parentalia. (See [February 13](#) for the first day.) It is a day to make offerings to the dead, especially ancestors. Because it's a day

associated with the dead, it was believed to be an inauspicious day to get married. (Should this news arrive late, as it's already your wedding anniversary and this concerns you, perhaps consider renewing vows on a more auspicious date.)



February 22

The Caristia

The Roman festival of the Caristia, also known as the *Cara Cognatio*, celebrates the family and promotes reconciliations. The holiday was celebrated by dining together *en famille*. Family reunions and reconciliations were encouraged. (The poet Ovid suggested that this could be best accomplished by excluding troublesome family members, although this is not in the spirit of the holiday.) Families joined together to honor the Lares, benevolent household guardians (See [December 23](#) for more information on the Lares.)

February 23

The Terminalia

Benjamin Franklin wrote, “Love your neighbor, yet don’t pull down your hedge.” An old saying suggests that good fences make good neighbors. Those aphorisms express the essence of the Terminalia, the Roman festival that honors Terminus, Lord of Boundaries. Today was devoted to inspecting and double checking boundary markers, especially as a means of maintaining peaceful coexistence.

Those who own property may find it beneficial to seek Terminus’ favor by

making offerings today. Traditional Roman offerings included honeycomb and wine brought to the boundary. Terminus was venerated in the form of a bust atop a boundary stone. Neighbors would drape him with votive garlands from their respective sides of the border.



February 24

Twin Peaks Day

Possessing spirits, doppelgangers, parasitic entities, tarot and other forms of divination, the power of dreams, alternative dimensions, and UFOs: when the television series *Twin Peaks* debuted on April 8, 1990, it was radical, as no other American TV series had ever portrayed occult topics so respectfully. It quickly became a favorite of esotericists. The *Twin Peaks* universe created by Mark Frost and David Lynch has since expanded to include books and a film. The plot is triggered by the murder of a young woman, Laura Palmer, and the consequent arrival of FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper in the town of Twin Peaks, Washington, on February 24, 1990. Today is celebrated by enjoying all things Twin Peaks and pondering its mysteries. Local events may be scheduled in areas where the television and film series were created, as well as online. Celebrate with a good cup of joe and a slice of pie.

Tibetan Method

In the second episode of the first season of *Twin Peaks*, FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper demonstrates a method of divination he calls the “Tibetan Method,” which is simple to recreate or adapt. It is a method that relies on synchronicity, and so today, as Twin Peaks fans synchronize their thoughts and actions, is an opportune moment. Whether or not this method is 100 percent authentically Tibetan is subject to debate, but Tibet does possess a rich history of divination including dice, mirror-gazing, and rosaries, but also pebbles and rocks.

1. Consider the mystery you seek to understand and compile a list of possible

outcomes to consider.

2. You will need as many empty bottles and small rocks as there are potential outcomes.
3. Line up the bottles in a horizontal row.
4. Standing at a distance, throw a rock at each bottle. State the outcome represented by the specific bottle either aloud or silently.

If the bottle is hit, this is a sign to pay close attention to the corresponding outcome. If there is no contact between bottle and rock, this indicates that this particular outcome can be placed on the back burner, at least temporarily. Should the bottle break, this indicates the need for close inspection indeed.

If the possibility of breaking glass is problematic, consider using rings instead, so that this method evolves into a game of divinatory ring toss. The bottle falling down would correspond to one that breaks.

February 25

Today was the leap day according to Julius Caesar's calendar, as opposed to our own February 29. That liminal energy may still radiate, and this is an excellent date for any kind of spellcasting. Here is a suggested spell, although you are welcome to avail yourself of the day's energies to suit any needs you may have.

Lucky 7 Financial Well-Being Bath

Seven is the number of luck. This magical bath incorporates seven ingredients to generate and stimulate prosperity. You can substitute other ingredients, as long as you maintain the number seven. If you're allergic to an ingredient, omit it. If you are finding it difficult to come up with seven distinct ingredients, it's easiest to incorporate different types of magically charged waters. If you must delete the nut milk, you can use both goat *and* sheep's milk. (Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for Holy Water for further information.)

1. Add equal quantities of the following ingredients to a bath. The water should be whatever temperature is most comfortable for you: almond milk, coconut milk, cow's milk, goat or sheep's milk, soy milk, Holy Water or

some sort of magically charged water, honey—ideally clover honey, as clover is a lucky charm.

2. Enter the water. While bathing, focus on the desired result of your spell.
3. This enchanted bath can be supplemented with candles and crystals.

Salem Village–Style Witch Cake

On this day in 1692, Mary Sibley, a neighbor of Salem Village cousins Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, recommended the creation of a “witch cake” to determine whether the two young girls were bewitched. This bit of English folk magic was among the sparks that triggered the witch panic and trials in Salem.

A witch cake is literally a baked good whose purpose is to confirm whether a person is under a witch’s spell and, if so, to identify the guilty party. Any kind of simple cake or cookie may be baked, providing it incorporates the urine of those suspected of being bewitched. The urine is the key ingredient. (Don’t worry. It’s not intended for human consumption.) Mary’s witch cake was crafted from rye flour, but it’s an emergency spell and may be created from any available baking ingredients that are safe for canine consumption—so no chocolate. Once baked, the cake must be offered to a dog. It’s rare for dogs to refuse food, so if the dog will not eat the cake—not even one bite—this is considered an ambiguous sign to be followed up with further ritual: the suspicion that the person is bewitched may be false, but there may be other underlying issues, whether physical or spiritual.

It is more likely that the dog will eat the cake. Should the dog begin to exhibit behavior similar to the afflicted people, this would confirm that they had been bewitched. If not, other causes must be found.

February 26

February 26 is a good date to initiate any sort of astral projection or psychic questing. Use moldavite or other beneficial tools to open safe, empowering paths for you.

Today is also classified among the Egyptian Days. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Moldavite

Moldavite is a beautiful green stone formed when, approximately 14.8 million years ago, a meteor fell in a region within what is now the Czech Republic. It's named after the Moldau River, also known as the Vltava or the Bohemian Sea, where it was first discovered. When the meteorite struck Earth, it melded and merged with rocks, thus integrating extraterrestrial and terrestrial materials and forces. Technically a tektite or impact glass, rather than a stone, moldavite continues to radiate this energy.

Moldavite is used to protect and guide those engaged in astral travel, as well as shamanic journeying. It also serves to ground individuals who don't feel at home on Earth (although it has a reputation for making the more Earth-centric feel "spacey.")

Moldavite is a delicate stone that must be handled with care. It's rare and limited in quantity, so it tends to be among the more expensive stones. It's believed to possess transformative powers, opening up chakras, and encouraging epiphanies (flashes of insight) while awake and during dreams. Bohemian and Moravian folklore suggests that moldavite encourages loyalty and marital fidelity and it was sometimes carved into engagement rings. Some believe that the Holy Grail is a chalice carved from moldavite.

Moldavite is a unique stone. There really is no exact substitute. However, other crystals exist that encourage psychic journeying and astral projection, such as angelite, moonstone, and selenite. These tend to be delicate crystals that cannot get wet. (If you seek to cleanse them, exposure to moonlight or wafting them gently through cleansing incense is sufficient.)

February 27

Saint of the Day

HONORINA

Today is the feast of Saint Honorina. She is the matron saint of captives, sailors, and all those who labor on boats. This is meant literally—those who work on cruise ships, for example, may claim her as a saint—but also metaphorically: seek Honorina's assistance as you journey through the rough waters of life. Invoked to help liberate prisoners, those who seek to thank her for her

intercession traditionally give Honorina their chains and shackles as a votive offering of gratitude. Offerings on behalf of the upkeep of her ancient shrines are also appreciated, as are the usual candles, incense, and flowers.

February 28

Kalevala Day

The Kalevala is an epic poem containing over 20,000 verses, compiled and created by Elias Lonnrot, philologist and folklorist. It recounts the mythology and Pagan traditions of Finland. Today is Kalevala Day, the date chosen because it's the anniversary of when Lonnrot dated his foreword for the book's first edition—February 28, 1835. Kalevala Day is effectively Finnish Culture Day. The day may be spent reading *The Kalevala* or excerpts, celebrating Finnish culture, especially its rich magical traditions, and is also an excellent time to pay tribute to the Finnish Pagan pantheon including rowan tree goddess Rauni, Tuonetar the Queen of Death, and Akko, supreme Finn male deity, or to study Finnish spellcasting.

Finnish Luck Spell

Traditional Finnish spellcasting is quite complex and involves intensive training. Deriving from ancient Finno-Ugric shamanic traditions, many involve singing highly detailed magical songs with great precision. However, see [March 16](#) for a simple Finnish Good Luck Crossroads Spell.

Spirit of the Day

LOUHI, THE WITCH OF THE NORTH

Louhi, variously known as the Queen, Mistress, Hag, or Witch of the North, appears in the Finnish epic *The Kalevala* when the hero Lemminkäinen approaches her, seeking to marry her beautiful daughter, the Maid of the North. She also plays a prominent part in the saga of the Magic Sampo, an enchanted device that grinds flour, gold, and salt from thin air. Louhi's name derives from a root word indicating magical or shamanic trance. She is the guardian and ruler of

the Pohjola, the North Land or back country.

Louhi is a master spellcaster and the type of goddess known as a “Lady of the Beasts”—she is a guardian of the animal world and will often be accompanied by numerous wild creatures, who may serve as her messengers. Especially associated with snakes and dragons, she may be invoked to heal animals as well as people. Louhi is a weather goddess who controls wind, fog, and precipitation. Some perceive a resemblance between her and Lauhi, the mother of Norse deity Loki.

If Louhi resonates for you, today is a good day to invoke her. Approach her very politely—she possesses qualities akin to Baba Yaga, another fierce, independent witch of the North. She may favor witches, herbalists, and those who care for animals. Offer her Finnish liquor and food. She is a queen and a goddess, and her offerings should be of suitable quality.



February 29

Leap Day

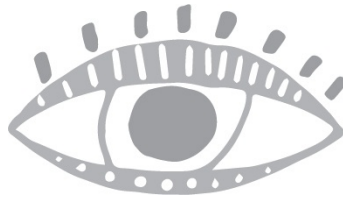
Today is the leap day inserted into the calendar every four years in order to harmonize the 365-day calendar with solar cycles. Thus, this date only occurs every four years. People born on this day technically only have a true birthday every four years but may celebrate other dates instead.

Because it's a liminal date, today is considered a day of tremendous power for any kind of spellcasting. “Liminal” indicates the meeting of multiple realms or energies, and so it's an especially auspicious day for any sort of spiritual petitions and contact with spirits of all kinds including angels, fairies, saints, extraterrestrials, spirit guides, ancestors, and other souls of the dead.

It has also traditionally been interpreted as a day of women's power, although this may be derived from an insulting perspective—it's widely considered a “blue moon” kind of day, meaning that it occurs so rarely or is such a freak occurrence that everything is topsy-turvy. Women were once permitted

and even encouraged to do things not usually allowed, such as propose marriage or ask men to dance or date. If the man declines her offer or invitation, traditionally he must give her a gift.

In some areas, women were afforded this power for the entire leap year, but typically it's only for today. However, there is general agreement that leap years and the leap day are auspicious for finding love.



March

The third month of the Western calendar, March was once the first month of the Roman year. Its name honors Roman deity Mars, father of Romulus who devised that first Roman calendar. Mars is also the namesake of the planet that rules the sign Aries, whose emergence coincides with the equinox.

Those born under the signs Aries and Scorpio, as well as anyone born in March, may consider him their patron deity. He also favors farmers and those serving in the military. (Rome's annual military campaign season began in March.) Mars may also be considered a patron deity of Romans specifically and Italians in general. Votive offerings include Italian wine and weapons—actual, replicas, or imagery. The deity Mars may be invoked to help protect your boundaries, as well as to guard your attempts to surmount them.

Angel of March: Malchidiel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Pisces, Aries

Birds of the Month: robin, sparrow

Birthstones of the Month: aquamarine, bloodstone

Flowers of the Month: daffodil, lotus, snowdrop

March's Holidays and Extra Power Days

March 1: Baba Marta Day, Baba Dochia Day

March 15: The Ides of March

March 17: Feast of All Snakes, Saint Patrick's Day

March 19: Saint Joseph's Day

Moveable Feasts

The first equinox of the calendar year occurs in March—the vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere and the autumnal equinox in the southern hemisphere. This coincides with the sun entering the fire sign Aries and the beginning of a new zodiac cycle. Even though it's not a fixed date,

equinoctial energy dominates the latter part of the month. Please see [“Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts”](#) for more information.

March 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Today is a day of power, dedicated to numerous sacred beings. It was celebrated as New Year’s Day by the ancient Romans, Thracians, and others, and vestiges of their rituals may survive, especially in Slavic regions. It’s a great day for any kind of spells, rituals, and divination.

Later, during the Christian era, today was classified among the Egyptian Days. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

The March Thread

March’s energy reflects that of its namesake deity—defensive and vigilant—so it’s the perfect time to craft amulets. Any type created today will contain a little extra oomph, but a pre-Christian Greek tradition is specifically associated with the month. It survived into Christianity, which we know because Saint John Chrysostom (c. 349–407) complained about it (and other amulets, too). The spell requires but a rosebush and a strand of red thread.

1. Leave the thread on the rosebush overnight. This may be done during the first moments of March after midnight but may also be accomplished last night, before you went to bed.
2. When you awake, remove the thread from the bush and tie it around either your left wrist or your big toe.
3. Wear this for protection until Easter or until it falls off, whichever comes first.

Baba Marta Day

Today is Baba Marta Day, signaling the end of winter. Baba Marta is a Slavic Queen of Witches, but she is also the spirit and personification of March. The holiday is celebrated by wearing and sharing *martenitsi*—small woolen ritual charms. (*Martenitsi* is plural. Singular: *martenitsa* or *martenitchka*). *Martenitsa* is the Bulgarian name for these amulets and the one currently most familiar in English, but other variations exist, too.

These amulets may be humanoid or geometric in form. The most basic are not difficult to replicate, and an experienced crafter will have fun with sophisticated versions. Handcrafted and given as gifts, the simplest are twisted red and white cords, but typically they are in the form of two dolls: a male, crafted predominantly from white wool; and a female, crafted mainly from red wool. (As with the yin yang symbol, the white doll may contain a bit of red, while the red one sports a bit of white.) They may also incorporate beads, coins, or other embellishments. These dolls symbolize the forthcoming spring, the emergence of new life, and general fertility. (They've also taken on the role of friendship bracelets.) The white color may also be understood as representing melting snow, while the red indicates the strengthening sun. Wearing *martenitsi* is believed to please Baba Marta and thus hasten spring. Variants in other colors once existed, such as black and white, but are now rare. It is traditional to wear red and white today, especially undergarments.

Martenitsi are never purchased, at least if intended for ritual use, as opposed to a souvenir. Ideally given and received by loved ones, they are worn—pinned to clothing or wrapped around the neck or wrists—until the wearer's first sighting of a stork or swallow, harbingers of spring, signals time for removal.

What one does next depends on local tradition:

- *Martenitsi* are hung on trees, especially those bearing fruit or flowers.
- For best luck, they may be placed on the first tree or bush you see in bloom.
- They may be placed someplace dear to the wearer (but it must be outside): a favorite tree, for instance.
- To obtain an oracle for the next 12 months: placed beneath a rock at night, the first creature to be witnessed nearest that rock in the morning is believed to foretell one's future. For example, ants indicate plenty of work, caterpillars signify opportunity, while a snake or spider may represent either power or trouble, depending on the opinion of the beholder.

Wrapped around a wrist, they protect against witchcraft and the Evil Eye. Although these are the most famous amulets associated with Baba Marta Day,

charms crafted from botanical materials, such as leaves or the first spring flowers, are also created.

The Matronalia

The Roman Festival of the Matronalia occurs today, honoring the goddess Juno Lucina—the aspect of Juno who guides babies through the darkness of the birth canal into the light. Today commemorates the date Juno gave birth to her son, Mars, and so we celebrate with her. For more information on Juno, please see the opening page for the month of [June](#).

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BABA DOCHIA

Baba Dochia is a Romanian spirit of spring. She may be Baba Marta's rival or her victim. Baba Dochia may be old or young. She may be an ancient Dacian spirit or Saint Eudokia of Heliopolis in disguise. (Eudokia shares today's feast.)

The consistent theme of her myth is that somehow Baba Dochia ran afoul of Witch Queen Baba Marta, either by mocking her or by marrying Baba Marta's son without permission. Some versions of her saga are lengthy and may relate to martisor charms—Baba Marta orders Baba Dochia to wash black wool until it's white.

Baba Dochia's primary myth involves her wearing nine coats simultaneously for warmth and then shedding them, one by one, as the weather improves. These coats correspond with the first nine days of March, known as the Nine Days of Baba Dochia. Her spirit is believed to linger during these days; she may be blamed for bitter weather or credited for sunny days.

Baba Dochia also provides a personal oracle:

1. Pick a coat: choose which of Baba Dochia's nine days is yours. You may select any date from March 1 to March 9. Ideally, this date is chosen before March 1, but you may choose a date today, providing it isn't March 1. Once you've picked a date, that's it. You can't change it.
2. The weather on your day foretells the manner in which you will age: if it's bright and sunny, you will remain youthful. However, if it's bitterly cold or stormy, it's a warning that you are turning bitter and sour. Take steps to prevent this.

BABA MARTA

Baba Marta, the winter witch, is a Queen of Witches. She may be a demonized Slavic goddess or she may be the personification of the month of March, or both. March's weather is unpredictable, and so is Baba Marta, who has a reputation for being fickle. Like the winter, she's feared, and people hope she'll depart quickly; however, she is celebrated by witches who flock to mountaintops and crossroads today, her special day, in the same manner as on Walpurgis or Midsummer's. The twenty-four hours of March 1, from midnight to midnight, are considered especially powerful for witchcraft and the convening of covens.

"Marta" literally means "March," but also resembles *Morta* or death. "Baba" is simultaneously an honorific and a pejorative: "Baba Marta" may be translated as Lady March or Grandma March—or, more harshly, the March Hag. Baba Marta travels with an entourage of twelve goats. Her colors are red and white, and she likes roses and snowdrops.

SAINT DAVID

David or Dewi (c. 475–1 March 589) is the patron saint of Wales and the Welsh, as well as vegetarians everywhere. Some theorize that a pre-Christian Welsh spirit hides beneath the mask of this popular saint, possibly an early incarnation of Davy Jones, ruler of Davy Jones' Locker, an underwater afterlife realm.

David has a reputation as a miracle healer, with vision and eye disorders being his specialty. (If he is your patron, you may beseech him for any miracle, however.) Today is his feast. The feast of his mother, Saint Non, is tomorrow, and they may be venerated together as a 48-hour event. Do not offer Saint David alcohol; he drinks only water. Nor should you offer meat—he was an ascetic vegetarian. Leeks, his emblem and the symbol of Wales, are the preferred offering, as well as charitable deeds and donations in his honor.

MARS

The month of March is named for the Roman deity Mars. March 1 is his birthday, a feast day shared with his mother Juno. They will share an altar together. Mars was once venerated in the form of a spear, and this survives in the glyph representing his planet: ♂. Known as the red planet, this corresponds to the deity's sacred color. His number is 3 and his sacred day is Tuesday, more obvious in French where the name of this day is *mardi*. It's the best day for those who venerate him or seek his protection to make offerings or attempt contact. March has numerous opportunities to honor Mars, including March 14, March 17, March 19, and March 23.

MARSYAS

The Thracians also celebrated their new year on March 1; however, for them, the month wasn't dedicated to Mars, but to the silen Marsyas. Silens are classified among the centaurs, as they are also equine-human hybrids. However, silens typically have only two equine legs rather than the full four associated with centaurs. Sometimes silens, especially Marsyas, are portrayed as wholly human, although they may sport horns. Silens are rowdy, raucous, and prone to drunkenness. They appear in the entourage of Dionysus, and Marsyas may be the wine lord's chief minister. Considered the wisest of all silens, Marsyas' symbols are a wine sac and a double aulos bone flute.

Today is the ideal time to seek Marsyas' blessings for a happy new year. He is a patron for those seeking to shake the status quo or for musicians whose sounds are not yet appreciated. He is also patron of those who play the bagpipes. Wine is the only offering of interest to silens, and lots of it.

March 2

On this day in 1692, the first of the Salem witch trials began. In commemoration, let's consider justice and legal success.

Court Case Success Spell

Court case root is a Hoodoo nickname for the root of the plant *Alpinia galangal*, otherwise known as galangal or laos root, a cousin of ginger and a mainstay of Asian cuisine. The easiest and least expensive way to obtain it is at stores devoted to East Asian culinary ingredients, either online or brick-and-mortar. North American folk magic identifies this root as magically providing legal success.

COURT CASE OIL

1. Galangal is the essential component of Court Case Oil. Grate the dried or fresh root.
2. Grind and blend the root together with poppy seeds and black mustard seeds in a mortar and pestle. As you're grinding, envision the happy

outcome of your situation.

3. Place the botanical material into a bottle and fill it with a mixture of joboba and sunflower oils.

What do you do with Court Case Oil? Soak cottonballs in it and place them in your purse or pockets. Hypothetically, they may also be dropped in the corners of a court room; however, if noticed, this may potentially cause trouble or embarrassment for you. You can also add a few drops to a charm bag or mojo hand, or use the oil to create a Court Case Success candle.

Brown is traditionally the color of justice, so a brown candle is best, but if unavailable, a white candle will suffice. Using a pin, rose thorn, or other carving tool, scratch your name and any salient details pertaining to your case into the candle wax. Now rub the candle with Court Case Oil, beginning at the middle of the candle and moving toward the top and bottom. Do not oil the wick. As you hold the candle in your hands, focus on envisioning your desires fulfilled. Light the candle.

Saints of the Day

SAINT NON

Non is one of the Arthurian saints—a saint whose narrative is connected to Arthurian lore. In Non's case, she was Arthur's foster sister, daughter of the future king's foster father, thus she was raised with Arthur. Depending on the variant of her legend, Non, having been either raped or seduced, conceived and gave birth to a son, the future Saint David, whose own feast is held on March 1. Mother and son were reputedly close while alive and remain so in the afterlife. They may be venerated together.

Non's intense association with various holy and therapeutic wells in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany has led many to believe that a Celtic goddess lies beneath the mask of this saint. Some scholars believe "Non" is a corruption of Rhiannon, the Welsh goddess.

Non may be invoked for any sort of cure, but her specialties have traditionally been mental illness and vision disorders. She may also be invoked on behalf of rape victims. If she responds to your plea, pilgrimage to one of her shrines or a donation toward their upkeep is an appropriate thanks offering.



March 3

Hina Matsuri

Also known as Girls' Day, Dolls' Day, and the Peach Festival, this Japanese holiday is one of five seasonal holidays originally scheduled to coincide with auspicious dates of the lunar calendar. However, after Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar, the date was fixed as the third day of the third Western month. (Some shrines still honor the original lunar date, possibly in addition to today.) It's a day to celebrate girls and pray for their success, good health, and good fortune.

Hina Matsuri is celebrated with displays of traditional dolls organized on red-carpeted tiered platforms, not dissimilar from altars. Displays and dolls may be simple or elaborate. Girls are given a pair of the two main dolls before their first Hina Matsuri. Family heirlooms are passed down over generations. The two primary dolls represent the Empress and Emperor. Depending on the complexity of the display, they may be surrounded by other dolls representing attendants, courtiers, and musicians. The tableau may be set up a few days or weeks prior to the festival, but the dolls are packed away by the very next day, March 4, with various superstitions warning what will happen should this not be done. (Typically, poor future marriage prospects for the child owner of the dolls.)

Modern practices often focus on young girls having fun and receiving a cultural education; however, religious and spiritual rituals rest at the heart of Hina Matsuri. Ritual dolls created from straw or paper are placed on boats and sent down rivers in cleansing rituals expected to carry impurities and misfortune away with them. (Please see [Awashima](#) below.)

Spirit of the Day

AWASHIMA

Harisaijo, daughter of Japan's solar goddess Amaterasu, developed a menstrual disorder, bleeding constantly. In those days and in that place, this was perceived as polluting, and so her husband's family exiled her to the island of Awashima, which contains the shrine of Sukunahikono-no-Mikoto, a kami (spirit) reputed to repair reproductive disorders and provide fertility. Harisaijo never returned. Instead, vowing to join in this mission, Harisaijo transformed into Awashima Myojin and was enshrined there. Today is her feast. Several shrines throughout Japan are now dedicated to her, renowned as doll depositories. As dolls may possess souls, it's not advisable to simply discard them. (The dolls may be vindictive and take revenge.) Instead, they are brought to Awashima shrines, where they are cared for and ritually disposed.

Awashima heals all disorders of the female reproductive system and is also reputed to cure sexually transmitted illnesses. She remedies infertility, protects the pregnant, and oversees childbirth. She is closely identified with her devotee, Japan's deified Empress Jingu, and the two may be venerated together. Traditional offerings for Awashima include dolls, hair combs and ornaments, as well as sewing needles. Women requesting Awashima's blessings of healing, fertility, and safe childbirth bring their underwear to her shrines as votive offerings.

March 4

New Love Ritual

This spell is intended to bring new love into your life but may also be used to remedy an existing romance, one that has grown sour or hasn't fulfilled its potential.

1. Add rose petals, hibiscus flowers, and cubeb peppers to your bath. (If allergic to any of these, omit. Flower essences may be substituted.)
2. As you bathe, envision yourself happily in love, giving and receiving the love you deserve and desire.
3. When you are done, save some of the bathwater.
4. This water should be sprinkled across your threshold or around the periphery of your residence in a clockwise motion to signal your readiness

for love.



March 5

The Festival of the Vessel of Isis

The festival of *Isidis Navigium* or *Navigium Isidis* (“Vessel of Isis”) is celebrated today. Commemorating her journey to Phoenicia in search of her beloved spouse Osiris, it also celebrates Isis in her guise as the goddess guardian of mariners, sailors, and all who travel by sea. This may also be understood metaphorically: we all navigate the precarious seas of life.

Devotees of Isis continue to celebrate this festival, although rituals are now more likely to be private than public. Back in the day, the festival featured elaborate public processions, akin to modern Carnival or Mardi Gras. A model ship was carried from the Temple of Isis to the river or sea and then returned to her shrine. See [below](#) for more information about Isis, Goddess of Navigators. Some suggest that this festival was celebrated on March 6 instead. Choose the date that suits you or celebrate both. See [March 7](#) for the Junonaria, which may conclude today’s festival.

Spirit of the Day

ISIS

The great goddess Isis, Mistress of Magic, was among the most widely worshipped deities in the early centuries CE. Beloved in her native Egypt, after it

was conquered by Macedonia and Rome, new devotees carried her veneration far and wide. Temples of Isis proliferated. She was worshipped in Rome and Paris, England and India. Isis is a sympathetic goddess who fulfills all needs. She heals, provides fertility and prosperity, and protects from disaster. Although theoretically, Isis is *everyone's* goddess, her special constituency includes women, children, orphans, single parents, witches, and occultists.

As her veneration spread, she also became especially associated with mariners, and it is in this guise that she is celebrated today. The Latin epithet *Stella Maris* (Star of the Sea), now associated with Mary, was among the titles of Isis. Modern rituals associated with Mary as Stella Maris or as Our Lady of Navigators may derive from those of Isis. (Please see [February 2](#).)

Isis may be requested for any favor: there is nothing she cannot accomplish. Today is especially beneficial for requesting protection and safety. If you have an altar image of the goddess, today would be a good day to cleanse, dress, or consecrate it. Traditional offerings to Isis include candles, flowers, fine incense, milk, and honey.

March 6

Saint of the Day

COLETTE OF CORBIE

Miracle worker Saint Colette (January 13, 1381–March 6, 1447) was herself the product of a miracle. Born in Corbie, France, her parents longed and prayed for a child but to no avail until they petitioned Saint Nicholas. Good Saint Nick heard their prayers and Colette's mother conceived, allegedly at age sixty. They named their baby Nicole after the saint. This evolved into the affectionate Nicolette, which further evolved into Colette.

Colette's parents died when she was a teenager. Afterward, she pursued a religious vocation, spending four years as an anchorite—a religious person who voluntarily lives walled off in a cell, its only portal a window into a church—and gaining fame as a miracle worker, renowned for healing children and possibly even resurrecting them.

Today, the anniversary of her death, is her feast, the ideal time to honor her and request her blessings. Colette is the matron saint of ailing and fragile children, those seeking to conceive, and pregnant women. Appropriate offerings

include candles and good deeds and charitable donations on behalf of the poor.

March 7

The Junonalia

This Roman festival honors the goddess Juno, especially in her guise as guardian and Queen of Heaven. The day was especially celebrated by Rome's matrons and marked by processions and parades. A statue of Juno carved from cypress wood was carried through the streets by twenty-seven young girls. It's theorized that this festival may have concluded a three-day goddess festival beginning on March 5 with the Isidis Navigium dedicated to Isis.

Juno and Isis share the title Queen of Heaven. As with Isis, Juno may be requested for any favor. Offerings of flowers, flowering plants, and peacock feathers, as well as incense crafted from roses and orris root, are appropriate. More information about Rome's number one goddess may be found in the opening pages of [June](#).

March 8

Today is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate and honor women and their accomplishments, but also to protest discrimination and misogyny. It is also an ideal day to honor your goddesses or any female spirits, saints, and ancestors. Clean altars, make offerings, perform rituals. Research your genealogy, seeking your female ancestors—often more challenging to discover than your male ones, as many cultures only documented male lineage.

If this is new for you, today is the perfect day to begin your journey to the Motherline, literal or spiritual. In addition to researching genealogy, DNA, and maternal haplogroups, spiritual and magical matrons may be discovered via dreams, visualizations, oracles, or divination.

Saint of the Day

JOHN OF GOD

Today is Saint John of God's day: born in Evora, Portugal, on this day in 1495, he died on his birthday in 1550. (This John of God is the Portuguese saint and stigmatic, *not* the modern Brazilian medium. There's no relation beyond their shared name.)

John Duarte Cidade was abducted at age eight by a man claiming to be a mendicant friar. The man eventually left John with strangers. John remained with them but also began living on the streets. He never saw his parents again.

John lived a debauched life as a gambler, mercenary, and human trafficker. He eventually began wandering aimlessly, doing a series of jobs, until he became a traveling salesman, peddling holy cards, relics, and religious books.

In 1536, while carrying a heavy load of books up a Pyrenean mountain, he encountered a beautiful young boy traveling alone on a rocky footpath. He was a small child, and John offered to carry him. The longer he walked, the heavier the child became. Eventually the boy transformed into a magnificent apparition of the Holy Child who handed John an open pomegranate topped with a cross and told him his name was now John of God. The apparition vanished into thin air, leaving John alone and stunned.

John traveled to Granada, where he suffered a complete mental collapse and was hospitalized, and only healed after a pilgrimage to the Black Madonna of Guadalupe. (This is the Spanish Black Madonna, not Mexican Guadalupe.). The two may be venerated together. John died from heart failure on his fifty-sixth birthday after jumping into a river to rescue a drowning man.

John of God is invoked specifically for mental health issues, alcoholism, and heart disorders. He is the patron saint of alcoholics and those who assist them, as well as those with heart disease, hospital and hospice workers, medics, firefighters, nurses, especially male nurses, those on the brink of death, and those on the brink of a nervous breakdown or who are recovering from one. Light candles for John, offer him pomegranates, and make donations in his honor on behalf of the poor and ailing.

March 9

Saint of the Day

CATHERINE OF BOLOGNA

An aristocrat and a gifted painter, author, and musician, Catherine de'Vigri

(September 8, 1413–March 9, 1463) served as a lady-in-waiting to Parisina Malatesta, wife of the Marquess of Ferrara. After Parisina was executed for adultery, Catherine left court and joined a community of beguines that was eventually converted to a convent of Poor Clares. She became Mistress of Novices and later an abbess of a new convent in Bologna, where she died.

Many were already convinced Catherine was a saint, as she had produced miracles and experienced mystical visions while alive. When after eighteen days, a sweet aroma began emanating from her grave, she was exhumed. Decomposition had not begun; her corpse was fragrant, considered a strong indication of sanctity. Catherine's body was relocated to a chapel, where she was dressed in her religious habit, and where you may still visit her: a nun seated on a golden throne within a glass box. Catherine was venerated as an unofficial saint for centuries before she was canonized in 1712.

Today, the anniversary of her death, is Catherine's feast. The matron saint of artists, especially painters, as well as those pursuing the liberal arts, Catherine is invoked against temptation and is thus a friend to those susceptible to addictions. Offer her flowers, candles, incense, votive imagery, and artistic endeavors, but if she performs a large miracle for you, you may wish to visit her at her chapel in Bologna and say "thank you" in person.

March 10

Phones are now our constant companions, rarely out of many people's hands, and they create a gateway of communication. However, as gateways, they are also perceived as vulnerable: they permit and facilitate the entry of influences and people into your ear, your home, and your office, especially now that phones travel everywhere with us.

Today is widely considered the birthday of the telephone, as Alexander Graham Bell's first successful test occurred on this day in 1876. It is an excellent day to spiritually cleanse your phones and fortify their defenses, both mundane and magical. The following suggestions are beneficial for anyone but especially those plagued by stalkers and obscene or just unwanted callers. Those receiving unwanted calls from the dead should also seek protection, as well as those whose phones are a vessel for others to criticize, berate, or castigate them or otherwise engage in soul-killing behavior.

[Safety note: Make sure that any cleansing method used does not damage

your phone.]

- Smoke cleansing is *generally* safe: waft the smoke of dried sage, rosemary, or frankincense gently over the phone.
- Archangel Gabriel is the sacred being associated with phone safety. Gabriel is identified with sacred communication, credited with advising Mary of her pregnancy and with dictating the Koran to Muhammed. He may be invoked to maintain your phone as a safe zone. Please see [March 24](#) for more details on this great angel.
- Blue cornflowers (*Centaurea cyanus*) are believed to protect against evil intruders and their influence. Grind dried flowers into a powder and sprinkle it near your phone or other communications devices to create a magical barrier.
- Phones potentially present other kinds of danger, too. Shungite reputedly protects against electromagnetic radiation emanating from phones and other sources. This black mineral is named for Shunga, the town in Karelia where it was first discovered. Shungite is crafted into stickers that may be affixed directly to phones, but shungite pyramids and jewelry, such as bracelets, may also be beneficial.

March 11

The first movie adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* was *Nosferatu*, directed in 1922, and sometimes suspected of having an actual vampire in its cast. Its director, F. W. Murnau, died on this day in 1931. In commemoration, today may be a good day to vampire-proof your home.

Vampire Repellants

The following botanical materials are reputed to keep vampires at bay and far away. They will not eliminate or harm the vampire; they merely prevent it from coming close to you or entering an area, which may be sufficient. These old folk-magic formulas are intended to work on folkloric vampires, not necessarily psychic vampires who—even possibly involuntarily—sap your energy but not your life essence. It may, however, repel ghosts.

- Dried lilac blossoms
 - Dried peppermint leaves
 - Pulverized rose thorns or blackberry brambles
 - Dried garlic (bulbs, blossoms, or both)
 - Dried rosemary leaves
1. Grind one or more of these botanicals in any combination within a mortar and pestle.
 2. As you grind, focus intently on the successful outcome of your spell. Envision yourself victorious and content.
 3. This powder may be sprinkled across a threshold, in the corners of a room, or throughout a room in cases of intense infestation. You may sprinkle it on your bedding before you go to sleep or carry the powder within a charm bag in your purse or pocket. You can also slip some into a small sachet to tuck into your bra or wear around your neck in a perfume locket. Most will find the aroma pleasant, providing you omit garlic bulbs, and many perceive the combined scent of roses and peppermint as erotic.
 4. If kept dry and out of direct sunlight, this powder has a lengthy shelf-life, but should the scent begin to fade, replenish by blending with new material.

March 12

Saint of the Day

SAINT SERAPHINA

Seraphina (1238–March 12, 1253), an extremely devout child from an impoverished Tuscan family, dreamed of becoming a nun but fell incurably ill at age ten. Because of her desire to emulate Christ's suffering, as well as her extreme poverty, Seraphina took to sleeping on a bare wooden plank rather than a bed. Her eventual physical paralysis meant that for the last six years of her life she never moved from that plank, until her corpse was removed for burial, at which point the plank miraculously sprouted white violets.

Seraphina was immediately hailed as a holy woman and petitioned for

miracles, which were reputedly received. White violets are now known as Saint Seraphina's Flowers; they are the ideal offering for her. Today, the anniversary of her death, is her feast. Seraphina is renowned for producing miracles of healing, reputedly restoring eyesight to the blind. She is the matron saint of those who are ill, disabled, and paralyzed, as well as those whose suffering evokes scorn rather than compassion. White violets can be rare, although you can grow them. Other potential offerings include incense, candles, and good deeds on behalf of the poor.

March 13

Monkey Spirits

Kasugi Matsuri, the Monkey Festival, occurs today at Katsuga Grand Shrine (*Katsuga Taisha*), the celebrated Shinto shrine in Nara, Japan, established in 768 CE. Other monkey shrines exist, too: for instance, the Monkey Temple in Katmandu, Nepal. Although calling someone a monkey is now usually intended as an insult, for millennia monkeys were beheld with awe and treated with respect. Today is an excellent time to venerate monkey spirits, to make their acquaintance, and see if any resonate for you. This is true for anyone but especially those born in the Year of the Monkey.

Despite the terrifying monkey demon featured in Sheridan Le Fanu's short story, "Green Tea," monkey spirits tend to be benevolent: folklore describes them helping humans. Beware, however: although very few are actively malevolent, many are tricksters who like to have fun, sometimes at our expense. Because they may be perceived as resembling elderly people or perhaps as a tip of the hat to evolution, monkeys are also associated with ancestral spirits. If monkey spirits do not appeal to you, this is also a beneficial day to venerate your ancestors or begin an ancestral practice.

Hanuman

Hanuman, hero of the *Ramayana*, is beloved throughout India and the Himalayas, as well as those parts of Asia influenced by Hinduism, such as Thailand and Cambodia. Hanuman is associated with monkeys in general but especially with the Hanuman langur, also called the common or gray langur.

Portrayed as a crowned monkey or as a man with a monkey's head, his image appears on countless amulets. Hanuman is invoked for victory, protection, fertility, and prosperity. The patron saint of kickboxers and wrestlers, as well as women seeking to conceive, he provides traffic safety and removes challenges and obstacles from the paths of his devotees.

March 14

Pi Day

Today is the fourteenth day of the third month, which can be written as 3.14, and so it's Pi Day. Pi (the Greek letter π) is the mathematical symbol used to represent the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter: 3.14159. This ratio is a mathematical constant, meaning that it is true for *all* circles, regardless of size. However, circles are more than math. They are an intrinsic component of spellcraft, and the magically oriented may wish to celebrate today by contemplating the magical properties of the circle. Here are some suggestions.

Formal circle casting and releasing prior to all rituals is a religious or spiritual custom, not shared by all traditions. A staple of Gardnerian Wicca and Western Ceremonial Magick, it's become popular, and so many are shocked to discover how many traditions do not incorporate this, including African Diaspora traditions and those from Central and Eastern Europe.

That said, the use of circles in various ways is an ancient aspect of spellcasting and spirit-summoning all over the globe. Circles may be visible or invisible:

- Visible circles are marked with salt, botanicals, crystals, or other magical items.
- For protection spells, it's best to cast a complete circle without any breaks, but in other circumstances, a circle may be cast by placing objects at the four cardinal points, now easier than ever to determine, as many smart phones come equipped with compasses and apps are easily downloaded.
- Invisible circles are cast with swords, wands, cords, and even your focused pointing finger.

The simplest protection spell of all is to cast a circle of salt and sit inside it

until you feel safe. Other materials such as ground frankincense may be added or substituted. To protect yourself from ghosts, grind up salt, garlic, and rosemary and use the resulting blend to cast your circle.

Circles are especially associated with fairies. Fairy rings are circles of mushrooms or plant saplings: these serve as fairy dancefloors. Devotees may invite their presence by creating circles for them using quartz crystals in the wilder parts of your garden.

Circles may be cast on floors or walls. Circles containing complex designs serve as demon traps. Simple chalk or charcoal circles containing the words “Out Lilith!” (ideally in Hebrew, but she reads other languages, too) serve to protect a birthing room from this sometimes feared spirit.

Circling or circumambulating is among the most ancient magical techniques. Circle dances are an example. Circling something—a plant, tool, person, shrine, or building—concentrates energy within the circle. Circles create a point of power in their center.

- Circle plants prior to ritually harvesting.
- Circle magical tools as part of the consecration or activation process.
- Circle a person or animal prior to healing rituals.

For some, although not all, the direction in which one circles is significant. Some perceive that only sunwise or clockwise movement is positive, while counterclockwise or anti-sunwise is diabolical or Satanic. Another name for counterclockwise movement is the left-hand path. There are those who never ever circle counterclockwise, while others believe this motion has specific magical uses like banishing or hexing. (And those of a non-dualistic bent embrace both left and right, as they do dark and light.) The words ‘widdershins’ and ‘deasil’ also refer to counterclockwise and clockwise motion, respectively.

A Slavic hex involves circling your target’s home at night seven times, muttering curses, while naked and carrying a lit candle prepared for the occasion. After the seventh circle, blow out the candle. Break it in two and bury the parts upside down, ideally in a cemetery.

March 15

The fifteenth day of a lunar calendar corresponds with a full moon. The Roman

name for the date corresponding to the full moon is “ides.” This doesn’t necessarily apply to our modern lunisolar calendar, but, as a vestigial memory, the middle of the month is frequently associated with spirits and rituals. March is no exception. The Ides of March are the most famous ides of all, as it marks the assassination of Julius Caesar. “Beware the Ides of March,” wrote William Shakespeare in his play devoted to Caesar, and the phrase has resonated ever since. It did not resonate for Caesar, however, when a haruspex (a diviner who interprets entrails) named Spurinna delivered this warning to him. Although Caesar should have heeded the soothsayer’s advice to beware today, there’s no need for the rest of us to do so. Instead it’s a deeply spiritual day, a feast day for numerous spirits, but also a good day to honor any with whom you already possess a relationship or work toward a relationship that you see.

Hypatia Day

Since 2010, today has been designated Hypatia Day. The exact date of Hypatia’s death is unknown; the date was chosen as the midpoint of March, the month in which she died. Among the foremost scholars and teachers in Alexandria, Egypt, during the tumultuous and often violent transition to Christian rule, Hypatia (370–March 415) was a worldly, charismatic, brilliant woman, who became head of Alexandria’s Platonist Academy in approximately 400, lecturing on Neo-Platonism, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy.

Hypatia Day is a day to encourage the study of math and the sciences, especially by girls. Many schools hold symposiums or special programs in conjunction. Hypatia is also among the most famous Pagan martyrs, and many consider her a folk saint with today as her feast. Her emblem is a seashell, especially an oyster or scallop shell. This is a developing devotion and so still evolving, but offerings to Hypatia include candles, wine, writing implements, and astronomy tools, things she would have loved.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

ANNA PERENNA

Roman New Year’s festivities concluded today with the feast of Anna Perenna, a huge public holiday boisterously celebrated with drinking, dining, parties, and picnics. Anna Perenna is the spirit of the year come full circle. Perenna means “longevity,” a gift of this goddess, who brings peace and prosperity in her wake.

She is also a spirit of liberty and justice.

The Roman Empire may be gone, but Anna Perenna is an eternal goddess of good fortune. Those who prefer a lunar ideology may honor her during the first full moon of March instead of or in addition to today. The Romans played drinking games in her honor today, and we can, too: allegedly, Anna Perenna, goddess of longevity, bestows another year of life for every drink downed in her name. Some theorize that today was chosen for Caesar's assassination because the conspirators believed everyone else would be too drunk to effectively object.

ATTIS

Today begins a series of Roman rituals and festivals honoring Attis, a spirit of vegetation, whose roots lie in Anatolia but who was the focus of a popular Roman mystery tradition. Today's festival is known as "The Reed Entered" and marks the day that baby Attis was discovered and rescued by the goddess Kybele among the reeds of a Phrygian river. A nine-day period of abstinence begins: devotees did not consume bread, fish, pork, or pomegranates, and most likely wine. Please see [March 22](#) for the next event in this extended multi-day ritual.

March 16

Finnish Good Luck Crossroads Spell

Crossroads magic exists worldwide. It's the place to commune with spirits, perform cleansing rituals, and leave your blues behind. It's also the place for a simple blessing spell that derives from Finnish traditions.

1. Go to a crossroads at a quiet time of day or night. Ideally, this is a crossroads without too much foot or automotive traffic, but go with what is possible for you.
2. Spend a few meditative minutes attuning yourself to the location and the spirits of the place.
3. Very politely introduce yourself and request that the resident spirits bless you with good luck, success, and prosperity. This was originally a hunting spell, seeking blessings and permission to harvest forest animals in order to survive long, harsh Finnish winters, but it may be adapted as needed. You

are more likely to receive what you need if you speak clearly and succinctly with the spirits, detailing needs and desires, but *always* humbly and politely.

4. Offer them libations by pouring water or other liquid on the ground as you circumambulate the crossroads. Walk away without looking back and return home via a circuitous route.

March 17

Today is Saint Patrick's Day, a major celebration, especially in areas with historically significant Irish immigration. Although it dominates the day, Patrick is but the most famous of several saints and spirits feted today. There may be a celebratory mood in the air and excessive drinking: we are approaching the end of Pisces season now, but still under its influence, a time associated with intoxication and illusions.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

FEAST OF SAINT ALEXIUS

Please see [July 17](#) for more information on this saint, as well as details of his famous banishing spell. Today is an excellent date to cast that spell or otherwise seek Alexius' blessings.

SAINT GERTRUDE OF NIVELLES

Gertrude, a visionary, renowned for her hospitality, died on this day in 659 at age thirty-three. Like Saint Patrick, Gertrude is renowned for banishing a creature many people fear and dislike. Gertrude controls rats and mice. She removes them from areas where they are unwanted, but she also cares for them. Cats chasing rats found Gertrude. She is now their matron saint, too. Gertrude is invariably portrayed with her animal companions: cats, rats, mice, and sometimes squirrels. If you love these creatures or if you fear them and seek protection that does not harm them, then Gertrude is your saint. Because she is a kinder, gentler saint, she is often the saint of choice for those who wish to celebrate today but have issues with Patrick.

Gertrude is also the matron saint of crazy cat ladies, herbalists, travelers, pilgrims, and the recently deceased. (You may request her assistance on their

behalf.) Gertrude is the guardian of graves. A good case may be made for her as guardian of those born in the Year of the Rat or the Vietnamese calendar's Year of the Cat.

Gertrude accepts candles, wine, and flowers, especially lilies. Gestures on behalf of needy felines will please her. Feed squirrels or feral cats in her honor. Decorate an altar for her with images of the creatures associated with her.

Gertrude also protects against mental illness and travel sickness. She ensures safety at sea. If you are traveling and can't find lodgings, send up a prayer to Saint Gertrude. If she comes through for you, offer donations on behalf of the animals she loves. A bronze statue of Gertrude stands on Berlin's Saint Gertrude's Bridge. Allegedly, if you make a wish or send a plea to Gertrude while rubbing the heads of her accompanying bronze mice, you'll receive it—but only if you keep your actions and request secret! This may be done at any time, not only today.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Saint Joseph of Arimathea, also called Joseph of Glastonbury, was the wealthy, well-connected man, possibly a member of the Sanhedrin, who came forward to collect Jesus' body after the crucifixion. He may have been Jesus' uncle. He may have owned tin mines in Cornwall and is credited with bringing the Grail and Jesus' walking staff to Glastonbury.

Joseph of Arimathea is the patron saint of aromatherapists, perfumers, and anyone who works with tin in any capacity from miners to merchants to artists, as well as undertakers, funeral workers, those who prepare bodies for burials, grave diggers, travelers, and those who keep secrets. Today is his feast day and an excellent day for molybdomancy—divination using melted tin. Joseph is invoked for healing and knowledge.

SAINT PATRICK

Today is Saint Patrick's Day, a feast day vigorously celebrated in many places including those that don't otherwise publicly acknowledge saints. Patrick has become emblematic of Ireland, but that is because he is credited with establishing Christianity there, not because he was Irish. Patrick was a fifth-century Christian Roman whose family resided in Britain. At age sixteen, Patrick was kidnapped by Irish raiders and sold into slavery in Ireland. After six years, he escaped and returned home, entering the Church. Patrick returned to Ireland as a determined missionary. He is now Ireland's patron saint and its most popular, alongside Brigid, with whom he may be venerated.

In earlier days, Patrick was so associated with the color blue that a specific shade is named “Saint Patrick’s Blue”; however, he is now intensely identified with the color green. Green is the color most frequently associated with money, and so Patrick is invoked in spells and rituals to raise cash.

Give Me the Green

Corned beef and cabbage are today’s *plat du jour*, at least in the US. Even if it’s not what you’re eating today, you’ll find plenty of cabbage in supermarkets and grocery stores. You will need a whole one featuring healthy green leaves. The spell only requires a handful of leaves. You can do whatever you wish with the rest of the cabbage head, although consuming it while focused on your prosperity may be understood as a secondary spell.

1. Save some cabbage leaves to seek Patrick’s financial blessings.
2. Separate the leaves gently, keeping them whole, so that they resemble cash bills.
3. Put them on a plate, which should be placed on an altar for Patrick along with candles and some Irish whiskey or other beverage. (Patrick is credited with introducing the still to Ireland.) A temporary altar set up just for one day is fine. If you choose to maintain a permanent altar, decorate it with greenery including live plants.
4. Request Patrick’s blessing: tell him how much you need. Offer to donate a percentage to a cause that you think will please him—charity on behalf of the poor is always appropriate—but only if and when he answers your plea.

Saint Patrick is invariably portrayed with the snakes he allegedly banished from Ireland. More information regarding this is found below. However, “snakes” may also be understood metaphorically, as in the phrase “snake in the grass.” In this context, Patrick is magically understood to be a consummate banisher. He is invoked to banish enemies from your life. And if you fear literal snakes and want them to stay far away, Patrick may be the saint for you.

All Snakes Day

Saint Patrick is most famous for chasing the snakes from the Emerald Isle,

something that has become part of his votive imagery—Saint Patrick is always portrayed with snakes. Inevitably in the days leading up to Saint Patrick’s Day, some literal thinker will snidely proclaim that this is impossible, as Ireland has never had resident snakes.

Snakes were emblems of healing and wisdom throughout the Celtic world, as well as elsewhere. They were also emblematic of Pagan mystery traditions. Thus, snakes may be understood metaphorically: Patrick drove off the non-Christian healers and wise ones, especially those in leadership positions. Some understand his banishment of snakes as representing Patrick’s expulsion of Pagan faiths in general. It may also be understood literally. Elephants are not indigenous to the Americas and yet you will now find them resident, having been imported. Votive images of Celtic deities associated with healing often feature snakes; it is quite possible snakes were imported, perhaps for spiritual reasons, and it was these snake-holding people who were banished together with their serpentine familiars. Or all or any of the above.

With the modern rise of Neo-Paganism, many take offense at the celebration of a man renowned for destroying Pagan and magical traditions. Many prefer to celebrate snakes today. Social media will be filled with images of snakes, defiantly posted. Those of a scientific bent may spend the day studying and discussing these fascinating creatures. It’s a good day for snake dancing, whether or not actually accompanied by snakes, the art form influenced by the sinuous movement of snakes. Alternatively, create a playlist of the many blues songs featuring snakes, such as “Crawling King Snake Blues.”

It’s also an excellent day to venerate the numerous snake spirits or those sacred beings associated with them. Today is especially associated with the great serpent deity Damballah (see [below](#)); however, literally countless snake spirits exist and today is an excellent time to venerate any or all of them. A varied bunch, their specialties typically include healing of all kinds, fertility, successful childbirth, wisdom, and occult knowledge. If you are stymied in research, a snake spirit may be able to help. Some suggestions: Simbi, Mami Wata, Marie Laveau, Damona, Rosmerta, Sirona, Hygeia, Medusa, Athena, Benten, Cihuacoatl, Angitia, Amonet, Lady White, Nu Kua, Proserpina, and the Nagas.

Damballah

According to a Dahomean creation myth, once upon a time, there was only Damballah. This huge white serpent lay motionless beneath Earth, cushioning her from the abyss—the great void—below. Eventually, however, Damballah

needed to move. His movements created Earth as we now know it, forming the landscape and shaking the stars into the sky. When the first rains began to fall, Aïdo-Hwedo, the rainbow serpent, appeared. The two great snakes fell in love and their love permeates *everything* in the universe, even us, even now.

Dahomey, an important center of West African snake veneration, was a center of the slave trade. When enslaved Dahomeans and other Africans arrived in what is now Haiti, they were given holy cards but no information about the saints portrayed upon them. Among them was one depicting a regal elderly man with a white beard in the company of snakes. They recognized Damballah. Vodou references to Saint Patrick may really mean Damballah. Because they have been syncretized, Saint Patrick's feast is Damballah's, too.

Damballah ranks among the most beloved and significant of the Vodou lwa. He bestows wealth, prosperity, good health, and fertility to his devotees. Damballah is extremely old—truly primordial—and so it's customary not to bother him unless it's really important. Damballah is envisioned as a gigantic white snake, so huge that his body forms seven thousand coils. Because he is so old, he does not communicate verbally but may hiss or make whistling noises instead.

Damballah's color is white. He is a stickler for cleanliness and is a fussy spirit, who dislikes strong odors including those of cleaning products and air fresheners. You cannot smoke near where he is enshrined, as he hates the smell. Offer Damballah white candles, beautiful white fabric, and white foods such as milk, eggs, flour, and raw rice. He likes ornamental eggs, too, such as those crafted from crystal, alabaster, or porcelain. Keep shallow dishes of water on his altar for him.

March 18

Sandwiched in between days associated with lots of spiritual and magical activity, March 18 is a fine day to focus on replenishing your personal power. There are numerous ways to accomplish this, but the following is a simple, inexpensive method.

Power Replenishment Tea

1. Create a blend of dried chamomile, peppermint, and rosemary. Adjust

quantities of each herb to suit your taste.

2. Pour boiling water over them, creating an infusion. Strain and drink.

- For a quick fix, tear open chamomile and peppermint tea bags and blend the contents together. Simple dried kitchen rosemary may then be added.
- You may also bathe in the infusion. Make a larger quantity and add it to your bathwater. Be sure to strain the herbs first to prevent any clogging issues.
- Dreams are also a source of replenishment. If you'd like to encourage dreaming, add a pinch of dried mugwort to the blend and drink before sleeping.
- With or without mugwort, these herbs may be added to a dream pillow. Skip Step 2 and place the blended herbs within a muslin bag or sachet.

Sheela's Day

For many, Sheela's Day festivities are merely a continuation of Saint Patrick's Day—an excuse to keep the party going—but in fact, Sheela may be far older than the saint. Who is Sheela? She may be Patrick's wife (in his day, the Celtic Church did not forbid priests from marrying) or his mother, but she may also be an ancient Irish goddess who predates Patrick.

Sheela (also spelled *Sila*) may be a goddess of spring, whose arrival heralds the end of the cold, stormy season. Dressed in white, she brushes away snow and ice with the branch she wields. Others associate her with *sheela-na-gigs*, ancient Pagan carvings that appear on European cathedrals and are closely associated with Ireland. These carvings typically portray naked, wizened old women who hold massive vulvas open to viewers. The images are mysterious rather than erotic. Their vulvas are disproportionately large and resemble gates or doorways, perhaps the portal through which we all enter the world. A spiritual exercise for today: contemplate a sheela-na-gig and utilize it in visualization and meditation. More mundane celebrations involve wearing shamrocks and drinking Irish whiskey, culminating with the “drowning of the shamrock” in a glass of whiskey.

Saint Joseph's Eve

Joseph was a carpenter and is now the patron saint of those practicing his old profession. Today, carpenters traditionally sweep out their work areas thoroughly, burning all shavings and woodchips in honor of Saint Joe. Coincidentally perhaps, tonight, the night before the feast of Saint Joseph, is traditionally celebrated with bonfires. (See [March 19](#) for more information on this saint.)



March 19

Today is the feast of Saint Joseph. Like Saint Patrick's Day, two days prior, this has evolved into a community holiday celebrated by many with little interest in saints or Catholicism, albeit on a smaller scale and in fewer places than the Irish saint. This may be understood in the context of the time period; when the lunar calendar was in use, these days were sandwiched between the full moon and the equinox, a deeply spiritual and magical time.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT JOSEPH

According to Christian scripture, Joseph is the man who married his fiancée Mary even after learning that she was pregnant with a child not his own. Alternatively, he may have been the man who stepped up to marry her once her pregnancy was revealed. In either case, he is the adoptive father of Jesus. Today is his feast. In Roman Catholic-influenced areas, Saint Joseph's Day may simultaneously be celebrated as Father's Day.

Joseph, a much-loved saint, is the patron of unwed mothers, anything to do with paternity, pastry chefs, bakers, carpenters, real estate brokers, travelers, and workers and laborers of all kinds. Sometimes you must give to get: although an extremely generous saint, long-held legend suggests that, even if inclined to

fulfill your request, Joseph will not do so until you have given to the poor. A variant suggests that the traditional vow in exchange for a favor from Saint Joe is to prepare and provide a banquet for the poor.

Joseph is invoked to find housing, anything from a sublet to desperately needed shelter to helping you clinch the deal on a mansion. (Although Joseph's sympathies are inevitably with the poor.) Should he come through for you, the traditional offering is to place a key on one of his public shrines. *Not* a key to your home—this is an excellent opportunity to use an antique key or that key you have that no longer opens any known doors. Many churches have shrines for Joseph; most Catholic churches will at least have a statue. No need to be a member of the congregation. Walk in discreetly and leave the key in an appropriate place to honor Saint Joseph.

Joseph is also invoked for a good death, and to end slander, lies, malicious gossip, and defamation. Just as many wear green on March 17, it is believed fortuitous to wear red or pink today.

Saint Joseph Helps You Sell Your House Spell

Saint Joseph has a reputation for helping sell houses efficiently, including those that have sat on the market for a *very* long time. Many who know nothing else about Joseph are familiar with this spell. Apparently, the success rate is high enough that real estate brokers have been known to secretly perform this ritual for their clients without letting them know. As you'll see, there are variations on this spell: there is no "right" version; choose what resonates best.

1. Bury a small statue of Saint Joseph on the property that needs to be sold.
 - Some, but not all, believe that the statue must be buried upside down.
 - Some, but not all, believe that the statue must be facing away from the house.
 - Some, but not all, believe that both these conditions must be met.
 - Some believe it's sufficient to stick the statue in the ground and all other details are extraneous.
 - Tell Joseph what you need from him.
2. Although some believe that it must be left where planted, others insist that once the property is sold and you're leaving, you must dig up the statue and bring it with you. Do not do this until you are 100 percent sure that it is a

done deal. If you do plan to eventually dig up the statue, remember to leave a marker identifying where it was buried, or else this may be difficult to accomplish. (And the statue must be in the earth, not a flowerpot.)

Saint Joseph's Table

The Saint Joseph's Table is an elaborate and delicious offering that takes extensive preparation culminating today. The tradition originates in Sicily and traveled the world with Sicilian immigrants. It took firm root in New Orleans, where it was adopted by local Spiritual Churches.

Saint Joseph's Table is an offering table laden with food and other objects and traditionally organized in three tiers rather than on a single flat surface. A statue of Saint Joseph placed at the top may be accompanied by floral arrangements, candles, and possibly statues of other saints. The other two tiers are devoted to food. The tiers or serving trays may be spread with breadcrumbs, representing the sawdust in a carpenter's workshop.

As the feast coincides with Lent, no meat is served. Instead, vegetarian fare is provided such as pasta, macaroni, or egg dishes. Traditionally twelve types of fish are included, whether as twelve varieties of seafood or twelve distinct dishes.

Baked goods dominate Saint Joseph's Table. These include American-style sheet cakes or Italian pastries specifically associated with today's feast. Huge bread loaves are created in elaborate shapes such as Joseph's emblem, a flowering rod, or decorated with crosses, birds, or ladders. Allegedly, if a bit of bread from Saint Joseph's Table is preserved in the home all year, the food will never run out. If you are a guest at a Saint Joseph's Table, you'll be expected to take a bit of bread home with you.

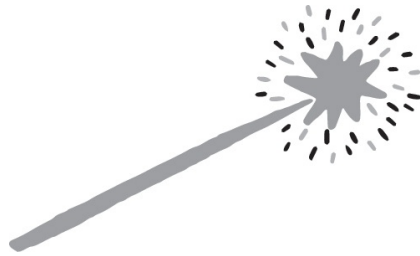
Bowls of fava beans, known as Saint Joseph's Beans, are placed on the table, which activates them, transforming them into amuletic Lucky Beans or Mojo Beans. Place one in your wallet and legend says it will never be empty. Place one in your larder and another legend says that won't be empty, either.

March 20

The Pelusia

The Pelusia is a festival dedicated to the triad of Isis, Harpocrates, and Serapis. Harpocrates is the Hellenized name for Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, while Serapis is a Hellenized syncretic version of Osiris. Together the triad is a Holy Family.

The Pelusia is a day for asperging—ritual cleansing via sprinkling. It is the watery equivalent of smoke cleansing. Some sort of liquid cleansing agent, such as Holy Water or Florida Water, is sprinkled over individuals, animals, tools, and space using a branch, long-stemmed rose, or other asperging tool. The original festival may have involved the use of Nile River water as Holy Water. It's a day to meditate on what is *your* Holy Water and to honor or concoct it. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for Holy Water for some suggestions.



March 21

It is likely that today marks the equinox. If not, it will occur just before or after, no more than a few days either way. Please see “[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#)” for magical suggestions for this very powerful day.

Ocean Water Cleansing Spell

Sea water is symbolic of rebirth. As today either coincides with the equinox or is very close to it, it's an excellent day for this ritual, which ideally helps you embrace new beginnings., whether these involve new projects or a commitment to any type of fresh start.

1. If you have access to the sea, fill a bottle with sea water—perhaps a gallon, but go with what is feasible for you—and bring it home.
2. If you lack access to the sea, create a replica of sea water by adding sea salt

to spring water.

3. Add this to a bath. You may also incorporate other magical items, such as flowers or essential oils, but keep it simple so that it does not distract from the sea bath. Ideally, this is accomplished by standing in the bath and either pouring the sea water over your head or ladling it over your body, but you may also add it directly to the bathwater.
4. Visualize whatever blocks your success floating away, leaving you free to achieve your goals and desires.
5. Dry yourself with a clean white towel and ideally put on new clothes, although freshly laundered ones will suffice.

March 22

Hagstone Portal

Hagstones, also known as holed stones or holey stones, are stones with holes in them. The caveat is that these must be *natural* holes. You cannot create a hagstone by drilling holes. Hagstones rarely have financial value—they're just rocks—but are valuable magical tools and talismans, believed to bestow luck and protection. Hagstones also serve as a gateway to Fairyland.

Allegedly gazing through the hole in a hagstone enables you to catch a glimpse into Fairyland or at least if you're in the right place at the right time. Today would be a good time. It's up to you to find the right place. Soaking the hagstone in rosewater or rose or violet hydrosol prior to gazing may be helpful, too. Allegedly drinking elderberry wine helps you see the fairies, too.

Spirit of the Day

ATTIS

Celebrations of Attis and Kybele continue today. (Please also see [March 15](#) and [March 25](#).) Today's feast, called "The Tree Entered," is a day of mourning commemorating Attis' death beneath a pine tree. As part of the ritual, a pine was cut down, decorated with an image of Attis and other ornaments including garlands of violets, and carried to the temple of Kybele on Rome's Palatine Hill

in a processional, akin to a funeral cortege. Three days of intense mourning ensues.

March 23

Scarlet Protection Charm Bag

Many magical systems around the world consider red to be the color of magical protection. This simple charm bag wards off malicious spells and the Evil Eye.

1. Fill a red silk or flannel bag with dried red flower petals, the redder the better. Suggestions: roses, carnations, hibiscus, geraniums, and tulips.
2. Add five small red crystals, again the redder the better. Crystals that resonate with you and catch your eye are best but here are some suggestions: garnets, red jasper, cornelian, and rhodonite. Cinnabar and vermillion are other good choices, but they are poisonous and must be handled with care. Avoid these if a child or animal might have access to your bag. Rubies are an excellent addition but may be prohibitively expensive.
3. Sprinkle powdered or crumbled dragon's blood resin in the bag.
4. Spit in the bag while focusing on your spell's goal.
5. Carry this bag with you or keep it in your home to radiate protective energy.
6. Sprinkle additional dragon's blood powder within the bag should you ever feel its power needs reinforcement. If you don't like opening it, pass the charm bag through dragon's blood incense.

March 24

Spirits of the Day

ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

Gabriel, archangel of the moon and dreams, is the Guardian of the Holy Waters

of Life. He is the Angel of the Annunciation, credited with dictating the Koran to Prophet Muhammed and teaching Adam and Eve needed survival skills after their expulsion from Eden. (I write “he,” but although some perceive Gabriel as male, others identify this angel as female or as sexless and genderless.) As the Angel of Communications, Gabriel is believed to oversee the internet.

Gabriel’s day is Monday, and should March 24 fall on that day, it’s an extra powerful time to contact the angel. Gabriel’s metal is silver; his element is water. Gabriel is the patron of those born under water signs, but especially Cancer, the sign affiliated with the moon. Gabriel is variously designated the direction west or north, depending on tradition. He is also the patron of astrologers, dreamers, remote viewers, mediums, philatelists, postal workers, and messengers.

All the archangels are considered exceptionally generous, but, at least according to Ethiopian lore, Gabriel is the most generous of all, providing more miracles to more people than any of the others. Gabriel is an angel of life and death. Invoked to provide fertility, Ethiopian tradition suggests that, should you receive his assistance, babies should be named in the angel’s honor. Gabriel is also a psychopomp, one of those spirits providing escort service to the next realm. It’s considered an honor and a blessing to be accompanied by gentle Gabriel. You may request his services for yourself or for another.

Today is Gabriel’s original feast, but he also has other feasts: March 26, July 24, November 8: you may celebrate any or all.

Because Gabriel serves the Lord directly—he stands to the left of the Divine Chariot—Gabriel is considered among the most powerful intercessors. Request that he whisper your pleas and prayers in God’s ear. Angels, theoretically at least, seek no rewards and cannot be bribed. Please Gabriel via your good deeds and charitable actions. He is the subject of a tremendous quantity of artwork, which may grace an altar alongside Gabriel’s primary symbol, a trumpet or horn.

Ask the Angels

This little invocation summons four archangels. Repeat as needed to encourage them to create a protective shield around you:

*Michael to the right of me,
Gabriel to my left,
Uriel before me,
Raphael guard my back.*

Archangel Lover Return to Me Spell

Magically speaking, the archangels are as frequently associated with the profane as the sacred. This spell encourages the return of a lover's waning interest or affections. You will need something belonging to the target of your spell—an item of clothing, such as underwear or socks, for example, or intimate bodily items, such as hair or nail clippings.

1. Create a fragrant brew by warming cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom pods in rosewater, ideally within an iron cauldron.
2. As it warms and begins to steam, recite romantic poetry or erotic sacred texts, such as the *Song of Songs* or *The Hymns to Inanna*.
3. Once it begins to simmer, remove the pot from its heat source.
4. Write the target of your spell's name in the center of a square piece of parchment or fine stationery.
5. Write the name of one of the following archangels in each of the four corners (one archangel per corner): Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, Uriel.
6. Place the parchment within the cauldron along with the item belonging to your lover.
7. Allow it to steep for at least an hour. You may continue reciting during this time or focus on the success of your spell.
8. Bring the pot containing all its contents back to a boil. Allegedly, your target should warm to you, just as the pot boils.
9. When the spell is complete, allow the cauldron and its contents to cool. Wrap up the contents of the spell, ideally in another larger item of your target's clothing, such as a shirt, and then dispose of it by burying it in a romantic area or one that has significance to you. If no romantic spot is available, bury it on your property or in a large flowerpot in your home and plant roses on top.

March 25

The Hilaria or Day of Joy

Today is a day of rejoicing, celebrating the resurrection and rebirth of Attis. (Please see [March 15](#) and [March 22](#) for more details.) Before the calendar date of the festival was fixed, this would have coincided with the vernal equinox. Devotees of Attis and Kybele should spend the day being as happy as possible. For those seeking to conceive, today is considered an especially beneficial and powerful day to seek Kybele's blessing of fertility.

Lady Day or the Feast of the Annunciation

This Christian feast bears several names: Lady Day, Feast of the Annunciation, Feast of the Incarnation, and the Solemnity of the Annunciation. It commemorates Archangel Gabriel's announcement ("the Annunciation") to the young Mary that she would bear the child of God. This is among the most ancient Christian feasts, documented since the fourth or fifth centuries and celebrated by numerous denominations. Because of the evocativeness of the name "Lady Day," non-Christians have taken to celebrating the feminine divine today, while others focus on remembrances of the singer Billie Holiday, known affectionately as Lady Day. Today is considered an excellent day to cleanse and purify space, both inside and out.

Saint of the Day

DISMAS

Jesus was crucified between two other men, identified as thieves by Christian theology but likely to have been insurgents against Roman rule. One of them was Dismas. He is now considered a Christian saint. Today is his feast. He is the patron of prisoners, especially political prisoners, those unjustly imprisoned, and those on Death Row, as well as antiquarians, undertakers, and funeral workers. He may be invoked to help someone avoid the death penalty. Because of his association with thieves, today is the best day of the year to prepare a special magical formula.

GOOD THIEF WATER, A.K.A. THE WATER OF SAINT DISMAS

1. Make an infusion by pouring boiling water over the herb cinquefoil (*Potentilla simplex*), also known as five-finger grass.
2. Allow this to steep for ten minutes.

3. Strain the herbal material from the liquid, then allow it to cool.
4. Sprinkle the liquid over your threshold, path, windowsills, and possessions to magically prevent break-ins and theft.
 - Save the liquid for use throughout the year, but refrigerate for long-term use.
 - This formula is considered extra powerful if today coincides with Good Friday.

March 26

Anthropologists have theorized that the need to record magic spells and divination results was among the primary incentives for the invention of writing. (Calculating taxes and recording debts are the other incentives.) Many spells incorporate writing, some that are extremely complex and others that are exceptionally simple.

Love List

1. On a piece of paper, make a list of everything you desire in a romantic partner—aim high but simultaneously be realistic. For example, the person must be kind or share certain interests or tolerate your unusual habits or . . .
2. If there are specific qualities that are crucial for your partner to lack, make a list of these on the reverse side of the paper. For instance, your future partner can't smoke or snore heavily or whatever it is that is truly important to *you*, even if it's not to anyone else.
3. The length of these lists is immaterial, other than they must fit on this single piece of paper, which may be as small or as large as you desire. Some may have extremely detailed criteria for a successful relationship, while others may not.
4. When you are done, place the paper beneath a candle that you have dedicated to love or romance, and allow the candle to burn all the way down. Once it has burned all the way down, examine the wax for auspicious signs. For example, if it's formed the shape of a heart, save this

as a talisman. Otherwise dispose of the remaining wax. If the paper still exists, burn it down to ash and scatter it to the winds.

5. A quick-fix version of this spell omits the candle and the time it takes to burn it: holding it with fireproof tweezers, light the paper itself and let it burn down to ashes, which should be scattered to the winds.

March 27

It's International Whisky Day! Whisky is a distilled grain alcohol and is a favored offering for many saints and spirits. Whisky has antiseptic properties and has been used therapeutically for various health issues. It's also used in magic spells, as in this money spell.

Whisky and Kelp Money Spell

1. Place a small quantity of kelp or other seaweed in a jar or bottle that can be closed tightly. Obtaining the seaweed directly from the beach imbues this spell with extra power, but you can also obtain it from a supermarket.
2. Fill the vessel with whisky, then close it, and place it in a safe place in a kitchen cabinet or within a drawer or closet in the heart of your home. This allegedly stimulates prosperity in your household or at least keeps the money from running out.
3. This spell may be enhanced by adding small crystals or lodestones to the jar.



March 28

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

New Orleans Holy Herbs Protection Formula

This traditional herbal formula is believed to simultaneously cleanse an area, banish negative spirits, and beckon benevolent spirits to fill the void once the problematic ones have departed.

1. The spell incorporates seven botanicals, as seven is a magical number. You only need a little of each of the following ingredients: black snake root, catnip, hops, jasmine blossoms, motherwort, peppermint, and skullcap. It's important that the number 7 be retained, so if you are unable to obtain any of these herbs, substitute something else such as mugwort, wormwood, rose petals, or, providing no one is pregnant or seeking to conceive soon, rue.
2. Place the herbs in a cauldron or pot.
3. Cover them with water and bring this to a simmer over medium heat.
4. Allow the steam to permeate the areas you wish cleansed. Using potholders, carefully carry the steaming pot as needed.

March 29

International Mermaid Day

Few spirits are as beloved as mermaids. Although powerful mermen exist, too, mermaids are perennial crowd favorites all over the globe. Emblematic of female power and sexuality, in the early twenty-first century, “mermaiding”—the art of emulating mermaids—has emerged as an increasingly significant therapy intended to boost female empowerment and heal the emotional aftermath of physical and sexual abuse. If this resonates with you and is not already familiar, it's an excellent day to begin researching. Costume mermaid tails are readily available in various styles and materials. A simple way to embrace your inner mermaid or merman is simply to go swimming—with or without a tail. Mermaids frequently travel in packs, and it may be a fun thing to do in company.

It's also a day to venerate one or more of the numerous mermaid deities. The most famous include Amphitrite, Aphrodite, Atargatis, La Sirène, Mami Waters, Oshun, and Yemaya. These mermaids are famous for bestowing creativity, especially the ability to master musical instruments; wealth; and fertility. Masters

of love, they will help you find the romance you deserve. Many afterlife realms are envisioned as being underwater, and so it's no surprise that mermaids frequently serve as psychopomps—those spirits who provide escort service to the world after death.

Mermaid Crystal Wand

To better commune with mermaid goddesses or for any lunar or water magic, create a mermaid-inspired wand. Let your own inspiration guide your way, but here are some suggestions: a good place to start is with a driftwood branch found on the beach, the gift of the sea. Polish and shape it as desired or leave it as is. Decorate your wand with cowries and other seashells, seed pearls, amber, and crystals associated with ocean magic such as quartz crystals, aquamarine, larimar, and other stones that evoke the colors of the sea.

March 30

From Baphomet to Black Philip, goats are among the animals most closely associated with witchcraft. Witches were believed to ride goats to their sabbats. Medieval witch hunters accused witches of worshipping the devil in the form of a goat. The Basque word for sabbat is *aquelarre*, the name given the most famous of Goya's witchcraft paintings, also called *The Witches' Sabbath*, which features a huge goat holding court amid a group of witches.

Goats, believed to have been among the first domesticated animals, are credited with discovering numerous precious items, not least coffee. An Ethiopian herder, noticing that his goats were particularly frisky, sampled some of the berries they were eating and discovered coffee. Goats are among the sacred creatures of the beautiful goddesses Aphrodite and Freya.

Aphrodite Beauty Wash

A spell to request Aphrodite's gift of beauty utilizes goat's milk.

1. Soak violets in goat's milk. If fresh violets are unavailable, substitute violet absolute or the flower essence.

2. Strain out the violets and, using cotton pads, apply the goat's milk to your skin. Allegedly this provides Aphrodite's gift of beauty.
3. Save the remaining goat's milk; you may continue to use it as long as the milk remains fresh.

March 31

Today is considered the birthday of modern Spiritualism, as it commemorates the day in 1848 when the young Fox sisters were first able to make contact with the noisy ghost haunting their upstate New York home. Celebrate with psychic games and experiments. It's an excellent day for séances and to initiate mediumship.

Solo Dumb Supper

“Dumb” is a synonym for mute, and dumb suppers are divinatory rituals held entirely in silence. More information about dumb suppers will be found in the entry for [October 31](#), as these are a Halloween favorite; however, dumb suppers may be held at any time. If you lack someone to play psychic games with you today or there is no séance to attend, you can hold a dumb supper all by yourself. Choose your guest or guests wisely: it should be someone no longer among the living with whom you would like to communicate but whose presence will not frighten or trouble you if you are otherwise alone.

1. Set a beautiful table for yourself and however many guests you've invited. Keep the number small, so as not to be overwhelming. Set place cards for your guests or otherwise let them know they are invited and where you would like them to sit.
2. There is no talking or verbal communication at this meal, but you may speak silently to your guests or simply listen. Pay attention to what thoughts or memories pop into your mind, seemingly unbidden.
3. Some believe a dumb supper must be eaten backward—from dessert to appetizer, for instance—and the table must be set backward, as well, meaning that standard etiquette regarding how a table is set should be reversed. Others disagree. Do what feels right for you. The only consensus

is silence.

4. Feed your guests something appropriate for them—old family favorites for returning relatives, for example.
5. When the meal is done, thank your guests for coming and usher them out before reverting to speech. You may also want to take notes on your experiences. Pay attention to your dreams tonight: even if your guests were silent during the meal, they may be more forthcoming in Dreamland.

Saint of the Day

MOTHER MARIA OF PARIS, SAINT OF THE OPEN DOOR

Born Elizaveta Yurievna Pilenko in Riga on December 20, 1891, she is also known as Maria Skobtsova (Maria was her monastic name; Skobtsova her second husband's name.) A member of the Russian aristocracy, she became a poet, an activist, a Russian Orthodox nun, and finally a member of the French Resistance who rescued Jews during World War II. With the cooperation of some street cleaners, Mother Maria smuggled Jewish children out of detention camps to safety hidden in trash cans. Today, the anniversary of her death in 1945, is her feast.

Mother Maria is a miracle worker and may be requested for anything, but her special expertise is in rescuing children. To gain her favor, give charitable donations, especially to poor women and children. Personalized offerings to Mother Maria herself would include candles, incense, and cigarettes. Trees are planted in her honor.



April

The origins of the name of this month are murky and subject to debate. The Roman poet Ovid wrote, “The fourth month, in which thou art honored above all others, and thou knowest, O Venus, that both the poet and the month are thine.” Some historians thus believe that the name April pays tribute to the goddess Aphrodite (Venus).

Alternatively, “April” may derive from a Greek word at the heart of the goddess’ name: Aphrodite was born of the sea foam or *aphros* in ancient Greek. The Romans believed themselves to be descended from Trojan refugees, who fled from their vanquished homeland to Italy, led by the hero Aeneas. Aphrodite was Aeneas’ mother and thus, like Mars, an ancestral spirit.

Alternatively, another goddess, or her gifts, lies at the roots of this month’s name. April 1 is a feast of the Italian goddess Fortuna, specifically in her guise of *Fortuna Virilis*. Say “virilis” quickly and it resembles the French name of the month “avril.” Please see the entry for [April 1](#) for more information about this goddess.

The energy of this month is highly anticipatory and often gleeful. It begins with a day dedicated to tricks and concludes with the first of the three annual spirit nights (May Eve, Midsummers Eve, and All Hallows Eve). It is a transitional month—winter is officially over, yet in its early weeks, especially in northern climes, it’s not unusual for there to be a last gasp of winter, even snow.

April is punctuated with feasts and celebrations of powerful goddesses and saints of healing and magic. If you seek healing of any kind, this is an ideal month to request spiritual assistance. And if you prefer not to invoke spiritual aid, avail yourself of April’s energy in other ways, even if this involves creating a unique healing path for yourself.

Angel of April: Asmodel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Aries, Taurus

Bird of the Month: canary

Birthstone of the Month: diamond

Flowers of the Month: daisy; sweet pea; lily (white, calla, and Easter)

Fish of the Month: mackerel

April's Holidays and Extra Power Days

April Fool's Day: April 1

Megalesia, Six Days of Kybele: April 4–10

Feast of Saint Expedite: April 19

Saint George's Eve: April 22

Saint Mark's Eve: April 24

Beltane, May Eve, Walpurgis Night: April 30

April 1

"Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!"

See [January 1](#).

April Fool's Day

Today is April Fool's Day, a time for pranks, tricks, and practical jokes. The butt of the joke is the April Fool. Also known as All Fool's Day, the energy of the day is gleeful, wily, wary—what and when will be the next joke? April Fool tricks may be extremely simple—the whoopie cushion on the seat; the note pinned on the back—or extremely elaborate, protracted, sometimes public, hoaxes. Pay attention today, especially if something sounds too good to be true.

The Veneralia

This festival of Venus, celebrated today, is dedicated to a very specific aspect of the goddess Venus—Venus Verticordia, which is usually interpreted to mean “Venus the Changer” or “the Turner of Hearts.” This may refer to the goddess's influence over the hearts of her devotees or to the softening of her own heart to her devotees and thus her willingness to fulfill petitions and grant requests. During the festival, her image was removed from her shrine and carried in

procession by women to the men's baths, where the statue was undressed, bathed, then clothed and garlanded with myrtle before being returned to her shrine. Although these rites no longer exist in their ancient form, it is a good day to cleanse altars and altar images, especially those of Aphrodite or Venus. It is also an ideal time to petition Aphrodite or Venus for love, protection from sexual abuse, or whatever else one may need. If you would like to ponder the mysteries of Venus, meditate upon Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting *Venus Verticordia* for insights and inspiration.

Spirits of the Day

FORTUNA, LADY LUCK

Today is a feast of the goddess Fortuna, specifically in her guise as Fortuna Virilis, invoked by Roman-era wives to retain or revive their husbands' sexual interest. In the twenty-first century, however, anyone, regardless of marital or sexual orientation or gender, may beseech Fortuna's favor in this matter or for anything else under her dominion.

Fortuna is the goddess of fortunes, luck, abundance, and opportunities. She is an oracular spirit. It was once possible to have your fortune told in her temples, and today remains an excellent time for divination. She rules fertility, prosperity, and second (or third or fourth . . .) chances. Ask for her blessing today. Fortuna's symbols are the horn of plenty (cornucopia), a wheel, and a rudder (to stay or change course). Offer her round, wheel-shaped cakes, cornucopias, or cornucopia-shaped flower displays. Her traditional offering was a blend of milk, honey, and poppy seeds.

PROSERPINA

It is unclear whether Proserpina and Persephone were originally the same goddesses, but, as with Aphrodite and Venus, their names are now often used interchangeably. Proserpina is a goddess of independent magical practitioners and shamanic witches. Like a serpent, she slips in and out of the Underworld. Proserpina is a goddess of death, fertility, love, romance, magic, and protection. Traditionally portrayed holding a fish and a key and sometimes a torch, after her rites were banned by the Church, devotees signaled their allegiance to her with these symbols. In addition to fish, Proserpina's sacred creatures include serpents and bats, and her plants include rue and Mother of Thyme.

Today, Proserpina's feast, is an excellent time to seek her blessings.

Offerings include representations of her familiar creatures, as well as magical or divinatory tools and maybe a glass of Strega, Italy's witch *liquore*.

THE CIMARUTA

This amulet may reference Proserpina. A cimaruta is a stylized sprig of rue (*cima di ruta*) usually crafted from silver and from which small charms hang. These charms vary but typically include a fish, key, snake, owl, and moon, images associated with Proserpina specifically and Italian witches in general. (Some argue that Diana is the goddess at the heart of the cimaruta.)

The traditional cimaruta is small and worn as a necklace. Modern practitioners now also create larger ones to hang on walls. The cimaruta banishes the Evil Eye and malevolent magic while attracting fertility, prosperity, and general well-being. Today is an excellent time to obtain, craft, or consecrate one while simultaneously seeking the blessings of Proserpina, Diana, and other lunar goddesses.

April 2

Today's saints are both Egyptian, and so today may be an excellent occasion to contemplate the profound impact Egypt has had on the study of mysticism, magic, spirituality, and religion for millennia. Construct, consecrate, or obtain Egyptian amulets such as ankhs and scarabs. Pay tribute to the indigenous Egyptian pantheon, now so beloved all over the world, especially the goddesses Bastet, Hathor, Isis, Nephthys, and Sekhmet.

Saints of the Day

SAINT MARY OF EGYPT, A.K.A. SAINT MARY THE EGYPTIAN

When she was twelve, Mary (c. 344–c. 421) from Alexandria, Egypt, ran away from home to become a sexual adventuress. A beautiful libertine, her life completely transformed when, at age twenty-nine, she encountered a group of men congregating at the docks. Told they were pilgrims headed for Jerusalem and amused by the thought of seducing them, Mary boarded the boat, too. By the time they landed, Mary had accomplished her goal, having seduced every one of them. But instead of being pleased, she found herself dissatisfied and unhappy.

Traveling to Jerusalem, she had a visionary experience in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—a disembodied voice told her that if she wanted peace, she should cross the Jordan River. And so she did, spending the remaining forty-seven years of her life as a solitary desert hermit, her only companion an equally solitary lion. She ate only what she could find. When her clothes rotted away, miraculously, considering her state of malnutrition, Mary's hair grew long enough to cover her modestly.

She lived her life to the extremes, but always on her own terms. Mary may be invoked to help you do the same. Today is her feast day according to the Western Church. The Eastern Church celebrates her on April 1, and those who love her may give her a forty-eight-hour extravaganza. An all-purpose saint who may be requested for any miracle, Mary has two specialties: she may be invoked for hair growth, especially if there are medical reasons behind your desire; or to banish your demons, whether literal or internal.

Our Lady of Zeitoun

On this day in 1968, the first sighting of the Marian apparition now called the Lady of Zeitoun, also known as Our Lady of Light, occurred in the Zeitoun district of Cairo. Sightings continued for about three years. Millions of people, both Egyptians and foreigners, and adhering to various religions, reputedly witnessed the luminous apparition hovering over the domes of Saint Mary Coptic Orthodox Church. Crowds as large as 25,000 people congregated together, all claiming to see the same thing. Among those witnessing the apparition was Egypt's then-president Gamal Abdel Nasser, a practicing Sunni Muslim.

Our Lady of Light is among the most popular Marian apparitions worldwide. Crowds flock to the site on April 2 in homage. Today is an excellent day to request blessings and miracles.

April 3

Protection spells are intended to prevent or repel danger. They are expected to create an aura of safety around a person, animal, or place. Although protection spells are used to ward off physical dangers, these spells do not substitute for mundane security measures like locks, law enforcement, and security guards.

They are intended to supplement those methods, as well as to provide help in situations in which those methods are not applicable or available.

Depending on your situation and need, protection spells are cast with botanicals, candles, crystals, and your mind. You may have your own private associations, but the colors black, blue, and especially red (like a stop sign) are particularly associated with protection spells. In many traditions, “5” is the number of safety—the five fingers of your hand outstretched and thrust out indicate “stop” whereas pulled together tightly they create a fist. It’s also interpreted as the protective “5 Fingers of God.” (Other numbers associated with protection are 3, 7, and 9.)

The hand-shaped *hamsa* amulet, also known as the *Hand of Fatima* and the *Hand of Miriam*, derive from this concept and may be worn or hung on walls to radiate protective energy. Other similar amulets include the ankh to repel the Evil Eye, All-Seeing Eyes to scope out danger, and images of Gorgon Medusa to stop danger in its tracks. Black Maneki Nekos (the Japanese amulet now popular worldwide that depicts a cat with at least one raised paw) allegedly repels stalkers. Black tourmaline and other black crystals are used to prevent danger, especially from toxic people and psychic vampires. Spiritual appeals are also helpful. Request protection from your own ancestors and guardian angels. The following are but a few of the many spiritual guardians who may be requested for help in your hour of need: Athena, Artemis, Baron Samedi and Madame Brigitte, Ezili Dantor, Guadalupe, Hekate, Jizo, Kwan Yin, La Madama, Saint Martha, Michael Archangel, Raphael Archangel, Papa Legba, Ogun, Tara, and Santa Muerte.

April 4

The Megalesia: A Festival of the Goddess Kybele

The Megalesia or Megalensia was an annual Roman six-day festival dedicated to the goddess Kybele. The date was chosen to commemorate the arrival of Kybele’s primary votive image in 204 bce from Pessinus in Anatolia, now within the borders of modern Turkey. The Romans credited this image, formed from a meteorite, for their victory over Hannibal of Carthage. The Roman feast featured theatrical and musical performances, games, chariot races, offerings to the goddess, and a procession. Although the primary festival days were the first and the last, it was essentially one long extended festival, not dissimilar from some

modern Carnivals. Modern devotees can adapt these old rituals to suit their own personal circumstances. See more about [Kybele](#) below.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BENEDICT THE BLACK

Today, the anniversary of his death in 1589, is the feast of Saint Benedict. Known as “the Black” to distinguish him from the many other Saint Benedicts, he was the son of Ethiopians, who were enslaved in Sicily. Benedict is now the patron saint of Palermo, Sicily’s capital city. Benedict spent his own youth enslaved, but was emancipated at age eighteen, having demonstrated spiritual gifts and powers from an early age. Invoked against smallpox, epidemics, and contagious diseases, he is the official patron saint of Black people and those of African descent. Less officially, he is the patron saint of telepaths, as he, himself, was one. He is often portrayed with a flaming heart indicating his fervor. Milagros in the form of flaming hearts are appropriate offerings, as is fine brandy, and the usual candles and incense.

Papa Legba is sometimes syncretized to Benedict, and so offerings and appeals may be directed to him, too, today. Please see [January 18](#) for more information about Legba.

ISIDOR OF SEVILLE

Isidor of Seville (c. 560–April 4, 636), known as the School Master of the Middle Ages, helped convert the Visigoths to Roman Catholicism. A teacher, researcher, and church reformer, he is the official patron saint of students, archivists, librarians, and authors. *Unofficially*, Saint Isidor has emerged in the twenty-first century as the patron saint of the internet. Known as the cyber protector, he is believed to guard your computer—hardware *and* software—your work, and you when you venture online. Today is his feast day, and many recommend it as the perfect time for rituals to honor him and invoke his protection. Suggestions include using his image as a screensaver or as wallpaper. For extra protection, place a Saint Isidor of Seville holy card in your laptop bag, slip it beneath your computer tower, or attach it to the laptop.

Isidor’s sacred creature is the bee. Good deeds on behalf of their well-being, as well as on behalf of archives, libraries, and the poor, are appropriate offerings.

KYBELE

Kybele may be the world's oldest-known goddess. A clay statue excavated from Çatal Hüyük, now in modern Turkey, and estimated to be approximately eight thousand years old, portrays an enthroned woman flanked by leopards or lionesses. Although there is no name plaque attached, it is recognizably an image of Kybele. Her veneration seems to have spread from Anatolia to the Middle East, perhaps brought by the Hittites who called her Kubaba, which evolved into the Phrygian Kybele, and then to the Roman Cybele.

The six days (April 4–10) are dedicated to Kybele, and different aspects of the goddess are featured on the different days. Kybele is theoretically everyone's goddess—she is frequently described as God, the Mother—but historically her favorites have been women, children, transgender people, midwives, herbalists, diviners and fortune-tellers, crystal gazers and scryers, as well as those who work with or on behalf of big cats, her sacred creatures. Her sacred flower is the rose, and Kybele is associated with caves and mountains. Her symbol is a frame drum. An unpretentious spirit who likes when devotees gather together in celebration, Kybele likes figs, honey, arak, and Greek or Turkish foods. Make enough so that you can dine with the goddess.

April 5

Today is the second day of the Megalesia festival devoted to the goddess Kybele. For further details, please see [April 4](#). Today, we will focus on one of her primary symbols and messengers: big cats. According to legend, Kybele, an abandoned baby, was rescued by lions and leopards, then resident in the wild forests of Anatolia. Kybele was nursed on feline milk and reared and protected by the big cats. Now, she protects them.

If big cats are your familiars, if their presence resonates in your life, whether you work on their behalf or you just love them, Kybele may be your goddess. (Conversely, if you hunt big cats or otherwise persecute them, she is *not* your goddess.) Kybele may be invoked to protect these cats, now so endangered. She may also be invoked to protect you and your loved ones. Kybele frequently responds to petitions through dreams and visions—big cats are her messengers and among her primary symbols. Pay attention when you see them in your dreams. Today is a good day to study the symbolism of large cats, especially lions and leopards.

April 6

Today marks the third day of the Megalesia, the festival devoted to the goddess Kybele. Please see details on [April 4](#). Today we will focus on her interaction with herbalists. Please note, it's extremely challenging to summarize a profoundly ancient and mysterious goddess in a few paragraphs. This daily examination of specific attributes and abilities is specific to this book and does not reflect Kybele's Roman festival. Feel free to adapt to your own needs.

As discussed in yesterday's entry, legends of the goddess Kybele say she was raised by lions and leopards. The legend continues: the influence of the big cats and the forest itself caused Kybele to evolve into the world's greatest witch, so powerful that she eventually transformed into an immortal goddess. She learned the secret wisdom of the wild creatures, but also of the botanical world.

In her adolescence, Kybele became fascinated by the people who sometimes ventured into the woods. She followed them back to their homes, where she observed them, learning their secrets, too. Sometimes she interacted with them, always stealing back to the forest when she chose. Sometimes people followed her. Before temples were built for Kybele in the great cities of Anatolia, her ecstatic rites were held in forests.

Kybele empathized with the people she observed, using her herbal skills to heal them and teaching those she especially loved the secrets of the forest plants. She benefited from this interaction, too, her knowledge growing in response to their needs. Kybele became a master midwife and healer. She is a matron goddess of modern midwives, something shared with her friend, the goddess Hekate. A relief from the Anatolian city of Pergamon shows the two goddesses together in conversation. Kybele, seated beside a lion, holds her frame drum, a device for trance and divination, while Hekate, standing beside her, holds what may be her torch or a broom, both emblems of midwifery. The original is now in the Pergamon Museum, but reproductions exist. The goddesses may be venerated and invoked together.

As her veneration evolved and spread, her temple clergy developed reputations as skilled physicians, even able to provide gender reassignment surgery. If any of this resonates with you—if you seek such surgery or provide it; if you are learning herbalism, other botanical-based therapy, or midwifery or are already a master; or if you identify as a witch—then Kybele may be your goddess. Her festivities continue today through April 10. It is the ideal time to honor her or request miracles and favors.

April 7

Today marks the fourth day of the Megalesia, the festival devoted to the goddess Kybele. Please see details on [April 4](#), [5](#), and [6](#). Today we focus on Kybele as a goddess of fertility encompassing conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. She may be invoked for assistance at any stage of the birth process.

The name Kybele is usually translated as “cave,” “cave dweller,” or “place of caves.” An Earth goddess, Kybele is ever-present. She is *in* the Earth, but she also *is* the personified Earth. To speak with Kybele, it’s enough to put your lips to bare Earth. Caves are among the best places to commune with her. You go to a cave to speak with Kybele, but once you are in the cave, you are actually within Kybele. Many ancient people perceived the vaginal or birth canal to be akin to a cave. In order to be born, a baby leaves the dark inner sanctum of the womb through the narrow passage cave. Offer her roses if you seek her help, and speak to her from the heart.

April 8

Today is the fifth day of the Megalesia, the festival devoted to the goddess Kybele. Please see details beginning on [April 4](#) and continuing through yesterday. Today, we focus on her ability to prophesize or scry.

Kybele’s primary attribute, the symbol with which she is most often portrayed, is what appears to be a pan of water indicating her ability to prophesize or scry. Scrying is among the most ancient methods of divination, now most associated with crystal balls. “Scrying” is synonymous with “gazing,” thus someone proficient with a crystal ball is known as a crystal gazer. Before people gazed into crystals, however, they gazed into still water.

Scrying into a pan of water is among the most low-tech, low-cost forms of divination. You may request Kybele’s blessings and protection as you scry or those of any other sacred being you prefer. Today is also an excellent day to scry as a method of communication with Kybele.

Water Scrying

1. Fill a flat pan with water. This may be a cake pan or a sheet pan. The water

does not have to be deep, just still. Kybele is portrayed with the pan resting on her knees, but it's more effective to place it on a table.

2. Technically, that's it. All you must do is relax your mind and see what images appear to you when gazing into the water. However, here are some helpful tips:

- Meditate beforehand or otherwise free your mind of worries, concerns, and background noise, as it interferes with the process.
- Relax your gaze: the most challenging aspect of scrying is getting your gaze right. Look dreamily into the pan, alert but not straining.
- Visions may appear in the water but may also appear as unbidden, spontaneous thoughts or mental pictures, hence the need for the first tip.
- Time yourself, starting with no more than ten or fifteen minutes of scrying. As you become more experienced, you can scry for longer.
- Some find placing one lit candle behind the pan, across from you, to be helpful.
- To stimulate the process, drip one or two drops of oil into the water and follow their movements.

Three Days of the Writing of The Book of the Law

April 8 marks the first of three days of celebrating by Thelemites and fans of Aleister Crowley worldwide in commemoration of the receiving of the three chapters of his *The Book of the Law*, also known as *Liber AL*. Each day is celebrated by reading a chapter on its respective day. Celebrants read Chapter 1 today. Copies of *The Book of the Law* are easily obtainable, online as well as in print form.

During a 1904 visit to an Egyptian museum, Rose Kelly was drawn to an exhibit numbered 666, featuring Egyptian deities Hadit and Ra-Hoor-Khuit (manifestations of Horus). Shortly after, she began channeling a spirit called Aiwass, a messenger of Horus, who dictated *The Book of the Law* through Rose's mouth. Her husband, occultist Aleister Crowley, served as scribe. *The Book of the Law* outlines the principles of the religion or philosophy of Thelema, whose name derives from a Greek word meaning "will."

April 9

Today is the penultimate day of the Megalesia, a festival honoring the goddess Kybele. Please see details beginning on [April 4](#) and continuing through yesterday.

The goddess Kybele is intrinsically connected to music and is credited with inventing flutes, drums, and other percussion instruments such as cymbals. Her rites, at least her Roman ones, are frequently described as orgiastic or ecstatic and featured music prominently, both staged performances as well as part of her processions, not dissimilar from the part played by modern marching bands. This both fascinated and troubled the Romans, who identified the wild, loud, raucous music as foreign and dangerous.

Beyond fun, entertainment, and pleasure, the music of Kybele's rites serves two purposes: trance and cleansing. Although she is accompanied by musicians, Kybele's own primary instrument is a frame drum or large tambourine, the ancestor of those used by modern sacred drummer Alessandra Belloni in her rituals for the Black Madonna or those described by Layne Redmond in her 1997 book, *When the Drummers Were Women*. These drums may be used to stimulate trance states.

Kybele is also closely associated with metal percussion instruments like cymbals and castanets. The sound of clashing metal is believed to cleanse space from malevolent energies and entities as efficiently as burning botanicals like sage. Even today, Italian folk traditions involve banging pots and pans at midnight to greet a New Year, vestiges of extremely ancient traditions.

Sound Cleansing

Assuming it will not cause trouble with neighbors, today is an excellent day to engage in some sound cleansing, especially if you are aware of negative energies, whether caused by humans or otherwise. It's a simple method and should ideally be fun.

1. If you have metal musical instruments like cymbals or drums, play them as loudly as possible or desirable.
2. If you lack such instruments, improvise with pots, pans, and cutlery. The one caveat is that the sound must derive from metal, ideally from iron or steel. Any kind of metal tool or instrument may be used—from jangling

bracelets to clashing fencing swords. The goal is not to reproduce an ancient ritual or to be “authentic,” but rather to provide the cleansing effect.

3. This may be a crowd activity and, if you are with similarly minded people, can evolve into a ritual, whether dedicated to Kybele or merely focused on cleansing. It is not necessary for people to comprehend the cleansing properties for this to be effective, however, so, if preferable, it’s sufficient for other participants just to have fun.
4. If you are alone or if it’s preferable to be discreet and quiet, circumambulate your space playing a triangle or cymbals, stopping in corners, behind perpetually propped open doors, and at thresholds for a little extra noise. Unless you have a major haunting or disturbance, this should be sufficient.

Three Days of the Writing of *The Book of the Law*

Today marks the second of the three days of celebration commemorating the reception of *The Book of the Law* by Rose Kelly and Aleister Crowley in Cairo. Further details are found in the entry for [April 8](#). The day is commemorated by reading Chapter 2 of *The Book of the Law*.

April 10

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

The Megalesia

The Megalesia, the six-day festival dedicated to the goddess Kybele, concludes today. For further details, please also see [April 4](#) through today. Today is Kybele’s birthday, and so it’s a great day to throw a party for the goddess or celebrate her in other ways.

Offer her gifts. Kybele likes music and rustic Greek and Turkish cuisine. Feed her feta cheese, olives, Mediterranean herbs, figs, honey, and deserts like baklava. She drinks arak or other anise-based liquor. Although she is a great goddess, she is not an ostentatious one and is happy with homemade gifts,

especially those crafted from clay, in the same way that a loving mother is pleased by the sincere efforts of a small child. It is also an ideal opportunity to request gifts and blessings from Kybele, too, for yourself or on behalf of loved ones.

Three Days of the Writing of *The Book of the Law*

Today is the final day of this three-day Thelemic celebration. Further details are found on the first day, [April 8](#). Celebrate by reading Chapter 3 of Aleister Crowley's *The Book of the Law* today.

April 11

Today, the feast of Gemma Galgani, marks the first of several days clustered together that are devoted to saints associated with miracle cures, many of whom themselves suffered terribly from illness and injuries. Please see [April 14](#), [15](#), and [16](#). Those in need of such healing or those who work on their behalf may wish to avail themselves of the magical energies of this period, even if the particular saints do not resonate. Request assistance from your own spiritual helpers and perform healing magic.

Numerous types of healing spells exist and for all sorts of purposes. You'll find a wide sampling of such spells in my earlier book, *Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells* (HarperOne, 2009), but you can also create your own. Remember: these spells are not a substitute for medical treatment but serve to enhance and complement it. They are also beneficial when no conventional diagnosis or treatment is possible. Here is one such spell intended to remove the vapors of illness, speed healing, and provide comfort.

Healing Spell

1. Blend equal parts Florida Water and Marie Laveau Water in an open pan or dish. Many recipes for Florida Water exist. You'll find one in the entry for tomorrow, [April 12](#), along with a description. However, the mass-marketed cologne is an excellent product, and many find it easier to purchase than to craft. Marie Laveau Water is less easily obtainable. You'll find the formula

in the entry for [June 15](#).

2. Sprinkle a small handful of sea salt into the potion and swirl it around a bit, so that it disperses.
3. Place this under the ailing person's bed and leave it there.*
4. After seven days, remove the vessel, dispose of the contents (outside on the ground away from your front door, or down the toilet if you have good plumbing), cleanse the vessel, and replace until the illness has passed.
5. In cases of intense illness, where heavy-duty measures are perceived as necessary, follow step #4 daily rather than weekly.

Saint of the Day

GEMMA GALGANI, THE LILY OF LUCCA

As Gemma Galgani (March 12, 1878–April 11, 1903) spent most of her brief life suffering or surrounded by illness and pain, it's perhaps no surprise that in the afterlife she has emerged among the most powerful miracle-healing saints. She is the saint for those who suffer illness and disability and whose physical conditions prevent them from pursuing their dreams. Today, the anniversary of her death—which was a Holy Saturday that year—is her feast.

Saint Gemma may be invoked by anyone, but she is the special matron saint of orphans, students, pharmacists (her father's profession), and young people seeking a religious vocation. Gemma is petitioned for healing, especially of meningitis, spinal disorders, and tuberculosis, the illnesses she herself suffered; however, she has developed a reputation as a miracle healer, and there are reports of her assistance with all sorts of terminal illnesses.

Gemma is also invoked for financial assistance, especially for those seeking money for treatment or whose cash flow is impacted by disability or illness. She is also a “road-opener” saint, requested to remove obstacles and create opportunities for success and happiness.

As a twentieth-century saint, photographs of Gemma are available and may be used to decorate an altar or as a focus of devotions. Her writings were published after her death. Offer Saint Gemma candles, incense, and flowers, especially lilies and roses. If she performs a significant miracle of healing for you, the traditional response is to visit her shrine in Lucca, where there is a pilgrimage route dedicated to her. (Gemma also has shrines in Spain—her heart is in the Sanctuary of Saint Gemma in Madrid.) If this is physically impossible

for you, donations on behalf of the upkeep of these shrines are appropriate, as are donations in her honor on behalf of those who suffer.

April 12

Florida Water

The name “Florida Water” is copyrighted and owned by the Murray and Lanman Company who manufacture and distribute this light cologne. Florida Water was developed as an American substitute for 4711, the original Eau de Cologne. (“Eau de Cologne” literally means “water of Cologne,” the city where 4711 was first made.) The official product is excellent, readily obtainable, and usually inexpensive. Many find it easier and more economical to purchase Florida Water than to make it. That said, thousands of recipes for homemade Florida Water exist with numerous variations. It should possess a light, refreshing citrus-rosemary scent.

Like 4711 and some other magical perfumes and charged waters, Florida Water potentially serves two purposes simultaneously:

- It smells good and so is used as a cologne or body splash. Wear it or toss some in your bath.
- Florida Water is a spiritual product used for cleansings and to remove negative entities and vibrations.

It is for external use only and must never be consumed. Florida Water is believed to enhance any other potion or recipe to which it’s added, as in the healing spell in the entry for [April 11](#).

- Splash Florida Water in the corners of a room for protection and space clearing.
- Cleanse your magical tools with Florida Water.
- Add it to your floor wash to provide magical protection.

Florida Water Recipe

To a base of two cups of vodka, Everclear, or other alcohol, add:

2 tablespoons of orange flower water or hydrosol
15 drops of essential oil of bergamot
15 drops of essential oil of lavender
7 drops of essential oil of rosemary
7 drops of essential oil of petitgrain (Kaffir lime, if you can find it; if not, regular petitgrain, which is the essential oils pressed from orange twigs and unripe fruits)
4 drops of rose attar

You should like the way Florida Water smells. Please feel free to adapt the essential oils and the proportions to suit your preference. If you don't love the citrus scent, add more floral notes, such as jasmine or rose geranium. You do need a base of citrus and rosemary, but you can adjust it to be stronger or lighter as desired.

SAFETY NOTE: The vodka is intended only as a base. Florida Water is for external use only and cannot be safely consumed.

April 13

Protection Bath

For those days when one feels beleaguered or overwhelmed or even threatened, this bath enhances spiritual protection while banishing any lingering toxic residue. This recipe is sufficient for multiple baths. You can make a smaller quantity, if desired.

1. Blend two cups of sea salt with one-half cup of baking soda. If you have aches and pains, substitute one cup of Epsom salts for one of the cups of sea salt.
2. Add five drops each of the following essential oils: frankincense, myrrh, lavender, lemon petitgrain, and vetiver, and blend well. It's five drops each, as 5 is a number associated with protection. Five drops of five different essential oils leads to 25 (5×5), which numerologically boils down to 7 ($2 + 5$), a powerful magical number. That said, if you cannot find any of the essential oils, don't let that stop you from creating the bath. Either omit or substitute another scent that pleases you.
3. Once blended, the protection bath salts will retain their scent and power provided they are kept in a well-sealed glass container away from direct sunlight. Only use a plastic container if planning to use the salts immediately, as the essential oils will react with it, potentially to your detriment.

April 14

Today begins the first of three days associated with saints reputed to perform miraculous healing cures. If you or someone you love are badly in need of healing, you may wish to honor all three saints, either together or one after the other. They are not incompatible and can share an altar. If these saints, or saints in general, don't resonate with you, you can still avail yourself of the energy of the day, as it is an excellent time for healing rituals and spells. Substitute the spirits or saints of your choice instead. Invocations of your ancestors instead of or in addition to this may also be beneficial. However, no spiritual interaction is required. If you prefer, tune into the magical energy of the day(s) instead. Here is a suggested spell.

Three-Day Candle Vigil

1. Create a healing candle intended to burn for the three days. If more than one person requires healing, each should have their own individual candle.
2. Although candles meant to burn for seven, nine, and fourteen days are available for purchase, it's rare to find a three-day candle. If you are a candle crafter, you can create your own, estimating the size as slightly smaller than half of a seven-day candle. However, you can use any candle available to you. If it's too big, you can either pinch it out at the end of the three days or allow it to burn out. Alternatively, if it's too small, you can create a candle relay, burning a new one when the first one goes out.
3. Green candles are often used in cases of serious physical ailments, especially cancer, while blue candles are believed helpful for emotional distress and mental illness. White candles may always be substituted. If you have personal color associations, then use what suits you best.
4. To start, hold the candle in your hands and focus on your desired outcome.
5. Scratch the name and birthdate of the ailing person into the wax along with any affirmations or messages to the universe you wish to include.
6. Light the candle.
7. Never leave burning candles unattended. If necessary, put out the flame and relight as soon as possible. When relighting or if lighting new candles,

repeat step #4 each time.

Saint of the Day

LIDWINA, THE ICE SKATER SAINT

When Lidwina (1380–April 14, 1433) was fifteen years old, she fell while skating near her home in the Netherlands. Diagnosed with a broken rib, rather than recovering, her condition grew mysteriously and increasingly worse, until she was completely paralyzed, except for her left hand. Lidwina experienced brief periods of remission but remained disabled for the rest of her life. She is almost always portrayed with her ice skates. Lidwina was perceived as a holy person, even while alive, as she was able to produce miracles of healing for others, although not for herself. She was acclaimed as a folk saint immediately after her death, although it took many years for her canonization.

Today, the anniversary of her death, is her feast. Lidwina is the matron saint of those suffering from chronic illness, especially but not exclusively multiple sclerosis, as well as those who lack health care, insurance, or the funds to pay for them, and those whose illnesses cannot be identified or diagnosed. Lidwina is typically portrayed in the company of an angel. Her emblems are her ice skates, a crown, and a rosebush. Traditional offerings include roses and candles.

April 15

Today is Tax Day in the US, even though it may or may not be the date that taxes are officially due. Nevertheless, the date is so ingrained in people's minds, and the level of anticipation or dread so high, that the date has developed its own special energy. The spell below should ease tension and help ensure happy outcomes, one way or another.

Happy Tax Incense

1. Grind, powder, and blend rue* and dried fennel seeds.
2. Sprinkle this powder on a small charcoal disc and burn as incense.
3. Gently pass documents and correspondence through its smoke.

Saint of the Day

SAINT FATHER DAMIEN OF MOLOKAI

Because of his associations with Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy, Father Damien (born Jozef De Veuster in Belgium) is widely considered a hero, as well as among the most famous of all saints. While the oldest documented case of Hansen's Disease is from a four-thousand year old skeleton found in India, cases of this highly contagious disease were first documented in Hawaii in the 1840s. Because of the fear and stigmatism of those suffering from this dreadful disease, in 1866, a quarantined leper colony was established in an extremely remote region of the island of Molokai. Conditions were so brutal that it was described as "Hell on Earth." Those even suspected of having the illness were shipped off to what was essentially a death sentence. The bishop of Hawaii felt strongly that this colony needed a priest, and Damien volunteered to go, arriving in 1873. In addition to conventional religious duties, Damien tended the sick, bathing and bandaging them, dressing sores and ulcers, and doing whatever was needed. He helped build homes and coffins and even dug graves. He spent the rest of his life in Molokai. By December 1884, Damien had, himself, contracted the disease. Today, April 15, the anniversary of his death in 1889, is his feast, as well as a secular holiday in Hawaii.

Few now suffer from Hansen's disease. Today Damien is invoked by those suffering from any serious illness, especially those who are treated as pariahs, although he may be invoked by anyone and for any miracle. Leis are the traditional offering given to Damien, as well as donations and good deeds on behalf of those who suffer.

April 16

Saints of the Day

BERNADETTE

In keeping with the previous days' focus on healing, today is a secondary feast of Saint Bernadette, who, as a young girl, uncovered the renowned healing waters of Lourdes. Bernadette is invoked for healing from any kind of illness or chronic pain. See [February 18](#) for details.

DROGO

Drogo is the patron saint of coffee and coffee houses, as well as those who own them, labor in them, or patronize them. If coffee is your elixir of life, then Drogo is your saint. He is invoked to assist in all aspects of the coffee trade, but Drogo is also a miracle healer, specifically invoked to heal broken bones, hernias, ruptures, gallstones, and diseases of the kidneys including kidney stones.

Drogo is also known to heal or alleviate depression and mental illness. He's reputedly sympathetic toward those suffering hangovers and caffeine headaches, too. Although Drogo is potentially anyone's saint, he's the special patron of those who are ashamed of their appearance, those perceived as unattractive, the mute, and orphans. His standard offering is a cup of coffee, as well as good deeds on behalf of the needy.

Coffee Spell

Coffee has various magical uses. Served to your ancestors, it wakes them up so that they can better communicate and protect you. Conversely, coffee can be used to banish ghosts from a location. (This may work for some low-level demons, too.) The sole ingredient is good-quality strong coffee. Don't bother with decaffeinated—the ghosts will laugh at you rather than leave.

You can purchase already ground coffee, but this may be more effective if you grind or pulverize coffee beans. Focus on the goal of your spell as you grind the beans.

1. Burn dry ground coffee in an incense burner.
2. Waft the smoke in the areas you wish to be entity-free, focusing on corners, thresholds, closets, and quiet, undisturbed areas. Simultaneously, announce in a firm voice what you wish these ghosts to do. ("Leave this space and never come back" or something similar.)

April 17

Coconut Unblocking Oil

This oil is believed beneficial when nothing is going right for you, when you feel

stuck or blocked. With the exception of the licorice root, easily obtainable from herbal suppliers, the rest of this magical formula can be sourced from most well-stocked supermarkets. (The licorice in this spell is the dried root of the *Glycyrrhiza glabra* plant, *not* licorice candy.)

1. Begin with a base of equal parts coconut and jojoba oils.
2. Grate licorice into the oil and then add powdered allspice.
3. Add true coconut extract and then peppermint, either in the form of the dried, ground herb or the essential oil or the true extract (found among baking supplies).
4. Use this oil to dress candles intended to remedy your condition. If it doesn't bother your skin (and allspice and peppermint might), then you may also add this to your bath, accompanied by affirmation and invocations of your spirit protectors.

Quantity is dependent on how much of this oil you wish to create—enough for a single use or a substantial amount. The jojoba serves as a preservative, and this will have good shelf life, providing its container is kept closed and out of direct sunlight. The oil's smell should please you; adjust proportions so that it does.



April 18

Expedite Eve

Tonight is Saint Expedite Eve, as tomorrow is his feast. Those seeking his assistance with magical or necromantic matters might consider making the request after sunset or around midnight tonight. Further information on this important saint is found in the entry for [April 19](#).

April 19

Saint of the Day

SAINT EXPEDITE

Saint Expedite is the master of speedy solutions. He is the saint to turn to when something is delayed or caught up in red tape or when a solution is needed *now*. Call upon Saint Expedite whenever needed, but today is his feast. He is at the peak of his power today and this is also an excellent time to thank him for previous favors and simply to honor him.

Despite malicious rumors to the contrary, Expedite is a “real” saint and a canonized one. The legend that when a delivery of saint statues arrived in New Orleans in a box marked “Expedite,” the nuns assumed it was the name of an unknown saint is patently false and meant to mock America and possibly women. Soldier saints were among the earliest Christian saints, and Expedite is classified among them, similar to Maurice or Victor. By the Middle Ages, Expedite was a particularly beloved saint in Sicily and the southern German lands. He is a favorite saint in the Indian Ocean island of Réunion, which features numerous distinctive roadside shrines dedicated to him. Yes, he was removed from the canon roll of saints for lack of sufficient historical evidence of his existence, but so were Saints Christopher, Barbara, and many other early saints, especially those likely to have been syncretized with Pagan deities early in the history of organized Christianity. Expedite is not a given name—rather, it is the word for a type of Roman foot soldier who traveled without baggage and thus could mobilize very quickly or expeditiously. Legend has it that this particular soldier was an Armenian Christian who was martyred rather than give up his faith. Early on he seems to have been syncretized with another speedy divinity, the Roman deity Mercury, whose name is at the root of all things mercantile, an area in which Expedite has great expertise. If Mercury retrograde has created or worsened problematic paperwork, ask Expedite to help speed relief. In modern Haitian Vodou, Saint Expedite and Baron Samedi may be syncretized. Expedite is, in general, venerated at home shrines and by independent practitioners, but he has a shrine over the front door within the International Shrine of Saint Jude in New Orleans, where pilgrimages may be made.

Saint Expedite forges very individual relationships with devotees. What he prefers from one person may not be what he prefers from another. Some claim that he will not perform favors unless first given red flowers. If you work with

him frequently, you will work out your own relationship. Expedite's favorite offering is famously a loaf cake. In America, he prefers pound cake, but has other favorites in other places. Some swear that Expedite will only accept Sara Lee brand pound cake. They are truthfully recounting their own experiences—Expedite may genuinely demand Sara Lee from them—however, Expedite has existed far longer than the Sara Lee corporation. I have never given Expedite Sara Lee, although I have purchased bakery pound cake for him and, in response to favors granted, have learned to bake it for him. Here is my recipe. Adapt as desired.

Expedite Pound Cake

2 cups flour

½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

2 sticks (or 1 cup) of softened unsalted butter, plus additional to grease the pan

1½ cups sugar, plus additional to sugar the pan

3 large eggs

1 teaspoon freshly grated citrus zest: lemon, tangerine, lime, orange, grapefruit, or some combination. Try to use organic fruit, as pesticides are heavily applied to citrus fruit. This is unimportant if Expedite is given the entire cake, but pesticides are not beneficial for human consumption, and, at least in my experience, Expedite likes devotees to eat and drink with him.

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 teaspoon of some other flavoring: almond, lemon, or orange extract, for example, or even a teaspoon of rum or whisky

½ cup whole milk brought to room temperature

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Grease a loaf pan with butter.
3. Sprinkle sugar over the greased pan, then shake the pan to discard the excess. Set the pan aside.
4. Combine the first three ingredients (flour, baking powder, salt) in a bowl and set aside.
5. In a mixing bowl, blend the butter and sugar until thoroughly combined.
6. Add the eggs, one at a time, fully blending each into the batter before adding the next.
7. Add the next three ingredients—the flavoring agents.
8. Once well blended, retrieve the bowl with the dry ingredients. Add this to the batter, a little at a time, alternating with the milk.
9. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and bake until done, approximately one hour. You can determine when the pound cake is done by inserting a knife or a toothpick into the center of the cake. If it comes out clean, the pound cake is done.

10. Allow it to cool for at least two hours before consuming.

Saint Expedite Candle Spell

To request a significant favor, burn nine green or red candles before an image of Expedite for nine days. You may use nine novena candles—large, glass-enclosed candles intended to burn for nine days—or you may burn nine small votive candles daily for a total of eighty-one candles. Whether candles burn continuously or you must relight them, remember to reiterate your request daily.

April 20

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

4/20 a.k.a Marijuana Day or Weed Day

Why is April 20 (4/20) associated with marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)? Despite numerous rumors and conspiracy theories, the date derives from five 1970s Marin County high school students who met daily at 4:20 in the afternoon to smoke pot together, choosing that time as extracurricular activities were then done for the day. They began using 4/20 as a code indicating marijuana to each other, and the term spread. Years later, one of the five found employment with the Grateful Dead. On December 28, 1990, a group of Deadheads in Oakland distributed a flyer inviting people to smoke 4/20 at 4:20 on April 20. The flyer came to the attention of *High Times* magazine and a holiday was born.

Beyond its recreational and therapeutic uses, cannabis has a long history as a sacred, magical, and shamanic plant. Marijuana and its cousin hemp are among those plants once associated with witchcraft. It is among the plants associated with Russian witch goddess Baba Yaga. Among other uses, hemp seeds are used to distract and thus disarm ghosts and especially vampires. It is sufficient to scatter the tiny seeds. The OCD tendencies of these discarnate entities are triggered, causing them to stop whatever they may have been doing in order to attempt to pick up or count all the seeds, thus buying you time to either get away or prepare stronger measures.

April 21

The Holy Infant of Good Health

Today is the feast of the Holy Infant of Good Health (*Santo Niño de la Salud*), who is considered a manifestation of Jesus Christ but is also a miracle-producing image, in the manner of other Holy Child, Black Madonna, and Black Christ statues.

According to legend, after young Rosa Maria Guadalupe Calderon of Morelia, Mexico, affectionately called Lupita, told her godmother (*madrina*) how badly she wanted a beautiful image of the Holy Child, the godmother, who owned a small shop, was on the lookout for one. She looked for a long time to no avail until one day, in 1939, two elderly women dressed in black came into her shop carrying a beautiful doll. The godmother, Maria de Jesus Magana, was sure this was the right doll and thought about asking to buy it. A less impressed coworker discouraged her, and she didn't, but immediately regretted her decision. The next day, the two women returned with the doll, and the relieved Magana immediately offered to buy it. When the women agreed, she went to her back room to obtain cash. When she returned a minute later, the eleven-inch doll was there but the women had vanished. She ran to the door but couldn't see them. When Magana asked a man, who habitually sat by her door, where the women had gone, he told her that no one had either entered or left the shop recently.

Miracles were soon attributed to the doll. Lupita's sister, for example, was healed upon contact with it. Visitors soon began requesting to see the doll. Soon a shrine was built—the first of several—and the doll advised its caregivers that it should be called the Holy Infant of Good Health. On April 21, 1942, the doll was placed in Morelia's Church of Saint Augustine and officially blessed. People from Mexico, the US, and further afield began visiting seeking miracles. Replicas of the doll have since been made and new shrines built, for example in Mississippi. Today is an excellent day to request favors and offer thanks for those received. There is no miracle, at least hypothetically speaking, that the Holy Infant of Good Health cannot produce. If you receive such a miracle, the traditional offering is either a pilgrimage to one of the shrines, public testimonials, or obtaining your own replica doll for your own altar.

April 22

Earth Day

First celebrated in the US in 1970, Earth Day is now celebrated worldwide. It is a day of appreciation for our mother planet, Earth, and to focus on environmental protections. Numerous activities exist from picking up trash to calling government representatives regarding environmental issues that concern you. Earth Day is something in which everyone can participate at the level that is best for them. On a magical level, it's a great day for outdoor rituals and to locate your own special power places.

Earth Oracles and Traditional Materials

Earth offers its own oracles. These two methods are ancient and low cost but often challenging for modern sensibilities.

1. Depending on weather, you can scry with dirt similarly to scrying with water. This works best in a hot, dry climate. All that is required is a patch of dirt with very little growing upon it. A little grass or an occasional small plant won't interfere. Clean the area of all extraneous material and especially garbage. Cast a circle in the ground with a stick or other tool. Close your eyes. Focus on the information you seek. You can ask the Earth to send you a clear message. Open your eyes and scry within the circle. You may see something that requires interpretation or thoughts, or images may appear unbidden in your mind. When you're done, brush the area, opening or removing the circle.
2. "Traditional materials" indicates natural materials gathered for the purposes of divination, as opposed to human-crafted materials such as cards, dice, and crystal balls. Traditional materials are *found* in what may be a life-long process. They are gifts of the Earth, and today is a good day to go collecting. These items may include pebbles, shells, sticks, sea glass, and similar items. They will be tossed in the manner of bones or rune-casting, and so the only requirement is that the items must be sturdy enough to withstand this practice and remain reasonably intact. (You may combine them with bones, too, especially if they are found rather than prepared.) Let Earth give you divination tools. Keep them in a small covered basket or

similar container. When you wish to use them, hold the covered basket in your hands. Close your eyes while you formulate your question, and then toss the items from the basket. Interpret how they've fallen; how they interact with each other; and, perhaps, which have fallen and which have remained in the basket.

3. The two oracles may be combined. Cast your traditional materials into a circle cast on Earth.

Saint George's Eve

In Central Europe, Saint George's Eve is the equivalent of Walpurgis Eve, a night for witches to roam. According to some beliefs, Saint George's Eve is also the end of the Season of the Vampire that began on November 29, Saint Andrew's Eve. During the dark nights in between, vampires are believed to hold sway and be especially bold. Saint Andrew releases them, and Saint George ends their reign of terror—at least until next November.

Tonight is an excellent time to engage in any kind of divination and spellcasting but especially for those intended to banish ghosts, night-revenants, and vampires who are traditionally staked in the manner that George wields his lance. Because George killed a dragon—a creature so much stronger than he was—this is also considered an auspicious night for protection spells and domination spells intended to guard you from powerful abusers. It is a night to rout the demonic, be it literal or metaphorical.

Saint George Crossroads Oracle

Those who fear marauding spirits and reveling witches should stay inside today. For the rest, George offers an oracle.

1. Venture to a quiet crossroads after dark.
2. Comb your hair forward—if you can get it to fall over your face, all the better.
3. Prick the smallest finger on your left hand so that three drops of blood fall onto the ground (ideally onto Earth).
4. You may receive an immediate vision.

5. In either case, return home silently, via a circuitous route. Don't look back, turn around, or dawdle.
6. Go to sleep. Remain silent until you write down any dreams you may receive or whatever details of them you remember.

April 23

Today is an extremely magical day associated with the full emergence of spring. It is sacred to numerous divine beings from various spiritual traditions. However, if your magic does not involve sacred beings, take advantage of today's energy to spend time outside. Absorb the power radiated today. Plant or harvest botanicals. Spend time acquainting yourself with local land spirits.

World Book Day

Today is World Book Day, the date chosen to commemorate the deaths of William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes, two of the world's greatest authors, who both died on this date. The day is celebrated by reading books, purchasing books, or giving them as gifts. Today is also a good opportunity to take to social media to post about your favorite books or to show support for a beloved author. If you're a writer, today is a good day to begin a writing project or return to the one that has languished.

In Barcelona, where World Book Day originated, today is akin to Valentine's Day, as Saint George, whose feast is today, is perceived as a romantic knight on his white horse, ready to sweep a lover away.

The Vinalia, a Festival of Wine

The Romans celebrated the feast of the *Vinalia urbana* (urban Vinalia), also known as the *Vinalia prima* (first Vinalia), today. Last year's vintage was blessed and sampled, while prayers were made for the forthcoming harvest and to seek good weather. The festival honors Venus and Jupiter. Venus, in her Italian guise as goddess of the garden, provides "profane" wine (wine for human consumption) while Jupiter is thanked for providing "divine" wine (wine suitable for sacred use, such as libations to deities).

In addition, the goddess was honored today in her aspect of Venus Erycina. Girls and women in general, and sex workers specifically, beseech Venus for her gifts of beauty, wit, and charm. The traditional offering involves concealing mint, myrtle, and rushes within bouquets of roses.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT GEORGE

Today is the feast of Saint George, among the world's most beloved saints. He is venerated by virtually all branches of Christianity, as well as by many non-Christians. His iconic image is instantly recognizable: a knight mounted on his horse lances the large dragon at his feet. Dragon lovers who recoil from this image may note that the dragon is virtually always portrayed as alive, and that some understand this image to mean that George controls or activates the dragon rather than slays it. The dragon may be understood as representing dragon energy or dragon lines, such as ley lines. According to Russian folk religion, George asserts control over all wildlife. If you fear snakes, alligators, Komodo dragons—or even dragons in your nightmares—request George's protection.

Envisioned as a heroic knight ready to come to the rescue, in the twenty-first century his dragon has been interpreted as representing the burning pain of fibromyalgia. Many sufferers claim to have received relief after requesting George's aid. He is also invoked to heal sexually transmitted diseases, as well as cysts, boils, and any condition that requires lancing. He's also renowned for healing mental illness. George is a guardian of animals and is invoked to protect their health.

In Slavic regions, two Georges may be acknowledged: the pious saint and a raucous nature spirit known as Green George, who heralds the awakening Earth. Pagans and others who are fond of George independently from his sainthood use Green Man imagery to represent him.

Today is George's Western Church feast. The Eastern Church honors him on May 6. Herbs and other botanicals harvested between the two feasts are believed to be extra potent, as they carry George's healing and magical blessings. Dew collected before dawn on Saint George's Day is believed to protect against the Evil Eye and any malevolent magic cast against you. English legend suggests that blue is George's favorite color, and thus it's traditional to wear or otherwise feature the color today, his feast day.



OGUN

Ogun is so ancient that he appears in numerous pantheons of West and Central Africa. He is also a prominent member of virtually all African Diaspora spiritual traditions, although attitudes toward him vary. Because he is so widespread, variations on his name exist: Ogou, Ogum, and Gu, for example. Ogun literally means “iron”—he is the spirit of iron, but he is also iron itself. When you hold a knife or a horseshoe, you are holding Ogun in your hands. By extension, he is the spirit of metal in general, of civilization and technology, and of the gifts and curses brought by metal, ranging from healing to violence. Every time you are in a car, a train, a plane, or an elevator, you are within the arms of Ogun. He is the lord of scalpels, printing type, metal musical instruments, and guns.

Because he is so widely venerated, Ogun is syncretized to numerous saints including Saint James the Greater, Archangel Michael, and Saint George, all of whom are portrayed with metal (swords, lances, scales). He may share all or any of their feast days.

Ironworking is associated with the most ancient magical and shamanic traditions. Ogun is a great magician. Iron is mined from Earth or arrives via meteorites, so Ogun knows all the secrets from the chthonic to the astral. Ironworking rituals derive originally from women’s ancient blood mysteries. Do not make offerings to Ogun when you are bleeding, whether from menstruation, a wound, or a cut from shaving. Not because he will do anything terrible to you, but out of respect and acknowledgment for these traditions.

Ogun’s colors are variously red and black, or green, or red and white, or blue and red, like the flag of Haiti. He likes a strong drink (whisky, rum, or overproof rum) and spicy food. Please see [July 25](#) for more about Ogun.

AL KHDR

Al Khidr literally means “The Green One” or “The Verdant One” in Arabic. If he has a name, it is now unknown. Today is his feast, as he is syncretized to Saint George. Or perhaps Saint George is syncretized to Al Khidr. Or perhaps there is no syncretism: many believe them to be the same being: Green George and Al Khidr with Saint George a Christian overlay atop a much more ancient spirit. Saint George and Al Khidr may be understood as alter egos, and today is their shared feast.

Al Khidr is the epitome of goodness and generosity, so ancient that his

identity is now unclear. How ancient is Al Khidr? He is said to have already been old when he traveled with Moses. Al Khidr may be an angel, a saint, a benevolent spirit, or a human who drank from the Fountain of Immortality and now wanders the Earth doing good deeds and providing assistance, especially to those stranded in the desert. He may be the benevolent spirit of water, so precious in a dry landscape. Myths from India suggest that Al Khidr's true home is under the sea and that he emerges to visit land on a green flying carpet.

The patron of travelers, both literally and those who travel mystic routes, many Sufi saints claim to have encountered Al Khidr who initiated them by gifting them a cloak. Al Khidr is also a healer, known for curing mental illness. He is associated with all botanicals but especially hemp and marijuana. Vows made to Al Khidr may be fulfilled at shrines of Saint George, and vice versa. You will know Al Khidr when you meet him, as he leaves telltale signs. His skin may bear a green tinge or his footsteps, handprint, or even the place where he has sat may be greenish. Persian miniatures depicting Al Khidr exist, but images of Saint George or the Green Man may be used to represent him, too.

April 24

Saint Mark's Eve

Tomorrow is the feast of Saint Mark, and so tonight is his eve. Mark himself is not necessarily among the “magical saints” like George, Andrew, or John the Baptist, but his eve is considered an exceptionally powerful night, associated with specific rituals and spells involving death and love. In addition, those born on Saint Mark's Eve are reputedly blessed with magical vision—able to see otherwise invisible spirits, as well as the stars at midday. (And whether Saint Mark's Eve is defined as after dark on April 24 or anytime today is subject to debate.)

THE VIGIL OF SAINT MARK'S EVE

The most famous legend of Saint Mark's Eve suggests that the apparitions of those destined to die in the year ahead will appear tonight at the church, graveyard, or other location where they will be buried. If you need to know who these people are, you can wait and watch them pass by, typically around midnight, although it could be anytime from dusk to dawn. It was once quite

customary for the curious to maintain vigils on church porches or within cemeteries in attempts to see the shades pass by. Regional variations on this tradition exist: some believe you must fast all day in order to catch sight of the spirits, while others insist on circling the church or other location three or more times first. However, those born today may be able to see the spirits without any other prior preparation.



SAINT MARK'S EVE DIVINATION SPELLS

Saint Mark's Eve is considered an ideal night for divination. It is an excellent time to schedule a reading or to read for oneself. However, there are also some specific rituals intended for tonight only.

SAINT MARK'S EVE GRAVEYARD DREAM DIVINATION

No, you don't have to sleep in the graveyard. However, you will have to schedule a visit for tonight. This divination is ideal for those planning to keep vigil in the cemetery tonight, as the two are easily combined.

1. Pluck grass from a grave at midnight on Saint Mark's Eve.
2. Put it under your pillow to induce and receive prophetic dreams.

SAINT MARK'S LOVE SPELL #1:

At midnight tonight, in a room lit by no more than one candle, gaze into a mirror and chant:

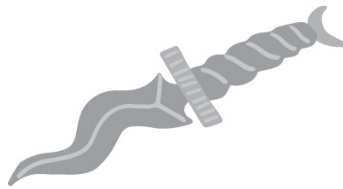
*Come lover, come lad, and make my heart glad.
For husband {or lover}, I'll have you.
For good or for bad.*

Allegedly, the image of your true love will appear in the mirror.

SAINT MARK'S EVE LOVE DIVINATION SPELL #2:

1. Hang your nightdress* up by the fireside in a dark room. (Some variations of this old spell insist the room be entirely dark, other than the hearthfire, but others allow you to light one additional candle, too.)

2. Sit quietly and patiently, naked and alone, in the room.
3. Allegedly at midnight an apparition of your true love will appear and turn your garment.



April 25

Miss Congeniality Day

In *Miss Congeniality*, a beauty pageant contestant is asked to describe her perfect date. She responds with “April 25, because it’s not too hot, not too cold.” Fans of the movie, as well as others just along for the ride, have taken to celebrating today, whether by watching the film or by spending time doing whatever would make this the perfect day for you.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT MARK’S DAY

Saint Mark, the first bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, is credited as the author of the oldest of the official Gospels, the Gospel of Mark. Today is allegedly the anniversary of his death in the year 68 ce. However, today is also the feast day of the popular deity Serapis, and it’s believed that the date and many of Serapis’ functions were transferred to Mark in order to encourage Christian worship on this day. Mark remains the patron of Egypt.

Mark’s emblems are a winged lion as well as a pen and a book. He is the patron saint of secretaries, notaries, interpreters, opticians, glaziers, those who work in any capacity with glass (especially glass painters), slaves, and prisoners. Mark may be requested to liberate the latter two. Mark is among the saints who guard travelers and is invoked against sudden or abrupt deaths. He is traditionally offered candles, incense, and marzipan, whose name is believed to

derive from *Marci panis* or “Mark’s Bread.” As a healer, Mark is especially associated with hearing disorders and illnesses of the ear.

SERAPIS

Alexandria, named for Alexander the Great, was initially a Greek city within Egypt. Ptolemy I, the first of the Ptolemaic pharaohs, who assumed control following Alexander’s death, was faced with a dilemma: the spiritual and other chasms between the Macedonian Greek rulers and aristocracy on one hand and the indigenous Egyptian population on the other were vast. To bridge it, worship of Serapis was instituted.

The name Serapis derives from Osirapis, combining the names of Egyptian deities Osiris and the Apis Bull. The Greeks, however, scorned deities in animal form, and so Serapis was envisioned in the style of a Greek god, most closely resembling Hades, who, like Osiris, rules an afterlife realm. Serapis is venerated alongside Isis and Harpocrates, the Greek form of Horus, envisioned as a child rather than a falcon. Today is a feast of Serapis. He is a spirit of birth, healing, death, and the afterlife, as well as a patron of intellectual pursuits.

April 26

Chernobyl

On this day in 1986, a catastrophic and far-reaching nuclear disaster occurred in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant near Pripyat, Ukraine. Considered the worst nuclear accident to date, its effects are still felt.

Artemisia vulgaris is considered to be among the primary magical plants in Russia, Poland, and Ukraine, as it is in many other places. Its English folk name is mugwort, but in Northern Slavic regions it’s called *chernobyl* or variations of that name. Chernobyl means “black stalk” or “black grass,” distinguishing it from its cousin, *Artemisia absinthium*, known as wormwood in English, also a magical plant, albeit one with a more notorious reputation. Although *chernobyl* is mugwort, following the nuclear disaster in 1986, many recalled the apocalyptic passage in the biblical Book of Revelations:

“The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky . . . the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.”

The herbs mugwort and wormwood genuinely taste bitter. Historically, they have both been used to deworm sheep and other livestock. Their essential oils are toxic and should *never* be used, at least without expert medical supervision (not an aromatherapist; a physician). However, the plants themselves have been part of the witches' repertoire of magical plants for millennia. As their family name *Artemisia* indicates, they are gifts of the goddess Artemis. Live and dried plants are the safest ways to use these plants.

- Mugwort is the dream herb par excellence. It is usually the crucial ingredient in commercially prepared dream teas, although its bitter taste will likely be camouflaged by mints or chamomile or something to make the drink palatable.
- Wormwood is typically associated with protection. Place a dried root under your pillow to ward off malicious spirits and negative dreams.

They are excellent plants to grow for oneself. Mugwort, in particular, grows so prolifically that many consider it a weed. Place a statue of Artemis near the plants to encourage growth and to enhance their magic.

April 27

The Floralia

Today marks the first day of the Floralia, the ancient festival devoted to Flora, Italian goddess of springtime and flowers. Flowers are the precursors of fruit, and so Flora is also a goddess of fertility, reproduction, and the pleasures of the flesh. Celebrated from this day through early May, this festival may be understood as the mother of modern May Day festivities with Flora as the original May Queen. (Please see entries for [April 30](#) and [May 1](#).) It was a licentious festival, although less so after third-century CE Roman authorities ordered revelers to remain clothed. The festival was suppressed in the following century, when all Pagan rituals were banned. Flora may be invoked for blessings of romance, love, sexual healing, fertility, and easy childbirth. Flowers are her primary offering, especially lupine blossoms. The festival continues through May 2. If you love flowers, goddesses, or this specific goddess, keep celebrating until then.

Saint of the Day

SAINT ZITA

Saint Anthony of Padua is renowned as the “finding saint”—devotees request that he locate everything from missing purses and documents to people who have vanished into thin air. Saint Zita is also a finding saint, but her focus is narrower. Zita locates lost keys. That’s her claim to fame; however, Zita is much more.

Zita is usually portrayed as a woman baking bread. It is traditional to honor her today by baking bread in her honor, whether for yourself, your family, or in emulation of Zita to donate to the poor. Zita is the matron saint of domestic servants, governesses, nannies, housewives, bakers, and waitstaff. Zita is also the guardian of those who have suffered sexual assault, as a fellow employee once attempted to rape her. She fought him off, scratching his face so badly that his attempt could not be kept secret. Zita may be requested to fight off your would-be attackers, too.

No special ritual is required for Zita’s gift of returned keys. She may be requested for this favor whenever your keys go missing. Simply chant a little rhyme for her, something like

*Zita, Zita, I’ve lost my key!
Look around and find it for me.*

April 28

The magical formula water known as Notre Dame Water is a component of happy home spells intended to stimulate harmony, kindness, tolerance, and respect. Notre Dame Water may be made whenever needed, but today is ideal as it is the birthday of actress Carolyn Jones, born on this day in 1930, and most famous for portraying Morticia, the matriarch of that happy household, TV’s *The Addams Family*.

Notre Dame Water

This formula water is essentially water scented with white roses and other floral notes. The simplest, most bare-bones method of concocting it involves adding

essential oil of white roses to spring water. (And very specifically *white* roses, which are the crucial ingredient without which this is no longer Notre Dame Water.) If you have the time, inclination, and the willingness to hunt down ingredients, the true recipe is more complex.

Blend Holy Water with three types of hydrosols: orange blossom, violet, and white rose. (Hydrosols are created during the process of extracting essential oils and may be purchased where aromatherapy supplies are sold.) Alternatively, create infusions of fresh garden flowers, if you have them. More information regarding Holy Water may be found in this book's [glossary](#).

- Place uncovered vessels, such as glasses, chalices, or pans, filled with Notre Dame Water strategically around your home to radiate peace and happiness.
- Place it in a spritz bottle and spray as needed, especially in moments of tension or to ward off arguments.



April 29

Saint of the Day

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

Born during an epidemic, Catherine of Siena (March 25, 1347–April 29, 1380) was an extremely devout child whose mystical experiences began when she was very young.

Catherine became a Dominican tertiary—an independent but affiliated laywoman who pursued a religious life while living at home. She was thus able to perform austerities that would not have been permitted had she lived in a convent. She ate virtually nothing, existing on cold water and communion wafers. She practiced sleep deprivation and kept her bathing to the absolute minimum. Although these austerities would eventually kill her, initially they did not slow down this driven, energetic woman. Because she appeared to thrive without eating or sleeping, she was suspected of practicing witchcraft,

investigated by the Inquisition, and closely supervised by her confessor. Catherine may be understood to have undergone an extremely extended vision quest, resulting in ecstatic visionary experiences including a mystic marriage with Jesus.

Highly articulate, her own writings survive, as do those of her confessors. Acclaimed as a holy woman and credited with miracles while she was alive, she was venerated as a saint as soon as she died. Catherine is the matron saint of firefighters, those who are ill, and nurses. She is invoked to put out fires, literal and metaphoric. She prevents and heals burns of all kinds but is also asked to protect you from suffering the fires of love and burning sexual temptation.

Today, the anniversary of her death, is her feast. Her offerings include lilies, roses, candles, and incense, as well as images of skulls.

April 30

Daylight hours may be spent in preparation for the evening, considered among the most magical nights of the year and also celebrated as a major Wiccan sabbat. May Eve, the night preceding the first day of May, is perfect for *any* kind of spellcasting, but especially spells for love, romance, fertility, and prosperity. Depending on location, tonight may also be known as Beltane Eve or Walpurgis Night.

The energy of today is typically one of anticipation for a night whose focus is joy and ecstasy. The holiday begins at moonrise and continues through the next day. May Eve is especially associated with fairies and witches. It is the first of the three annual Welsh Spirit Nights or fairy festivals (see also [June 23](#) and [October 31](#))—nights when fairies and assorted other denizens of the spirit world are free to roam as they will. It is a perfect night for any kind of fairy-related magic or attempts to contact the fairy realm. Those born on this day are believed born with the gift to communicate with fairies. This might be an innate gift or a learned aptitude—but the capacity to learn exists.

Tonight is also associated with ancient, sacred sexual rituals. Male and female divine energies unite for their own pleasure, but also to generate healing, empowering, magical energy that is believed to be beneficial to Earth. Identities of these divinities vary according to tradition. Modern Pagans may identify them with the Goddess and the Green Man, but there are many variations. A May Queen, either alone or in conjunction with a May King, may be chosen to

represent these divinities. The May Queen, sometimes also called the Summer Queen, may lead or preside over May Eve festivities.

Heksennacht, the Dutch name for this festival, literally means “Witches’ Night.” May Eve is among the primary witches’ festivals. In Germany and elsewhere in Europe, it may be *the* primary witches’ festival, as opposed to America’s Halloween. Tonight is the night when witches revel and ride. Historically, witches were believed to rendezvous on sacred mountain peaks for extravagant witches’ balls.

May Eve is traditionally a fire *and* a water festival. Depending on circumstances and desire, celebrate with bonfires or candle magic. It is also traditionally a beneficial night to visit hot springs, mountain streams, or thermal baths. Alternatively, begin your own Beltane bath by gathering flowers and fresh herbs and allowing them to soak in the power of the moonlight overnight, before bathing on May Day itself.

If it’s a rainy night, collect the rain in glass or crystal vessels. These may be added to the Beltane bath or saved to be used in love and fertility spells throughout the year. (Label your bottle and refrigerate if not using immediately.)

May Wine is the traditional elixir of this evening. The crucial ingredient that transforms this beverage into May Wine is woodruff (*Asperula odorata*), also known by the folk names Queen of the Woods or Master of the Woods. Although lengthier and more complex recipes for May Wine exist, the simplest rendition involves steeping sprigs of woodruff in white wine for several hours. Sugar and spring berries may also be added, to taste. The desired result is a refreshing, sexy beverage.

Although this is traditionally a party night, it is also an excellent night for solitary spells and divination. May Eve is considered an auspicious night to begin a romance. Earth’s innate powers of fertility are at their peak, and so this is considered the perfect night to conceive a child or begin any kind of creative project.

Invoke and venerate the goddess Freya tonight, especially in matters of love, fertility, and prosperity. Should this date fall on a Friday (Freya’s Day), it becomes exponentially even more magically supercharged.

May Eve is also associated with magical protection and the prevention of malefic witchcraft. Place alder branches (fresh or dried) in your home to keep witches away. Those seeking to protect themselves against witches with malintent should wear ground ivy, which may be woven into garlands or placed inside charm bags for private protection. This is particularly beneficial for those who often socialize with angry witches, whether in person or on social media. Ground ivy also allegedly breaks magic spells cast against you.



May

Famed as “the merry month of May,” the name of the fifth month of the year honors Greek goddess Maia, eldest of the Pleiades or Seven Sisters. On Earth, Maia is a solitary cave-dweller, who refused to move to Mount Olympus even after Hermes, her son by Zeus, arranged for her to do so. In modern mythology books, Maia is often sidelined, only discussed in relation to her son or her ability to avoid Hera’s wrath, despite her fling with Zeus. But Maia is a great goddess, as demonstrated by the fact that the name of a month pays homage to her, putting her on par with Juno and Aphrodite. Veneration of Maia spread, first to Italy and then throughout Europe. At one time, she had a significant following in Marseilles. It’s theorized that some French Black Madonna images are based on Maia with baby Hermes. The Romans identified their deity Mercury with Hermes, and some consider Mercury to be co-deity of the month.

Flora the flower goddess presides over the Floralia festival, which began on April 27 but continues through May 3, and is the Mother of modern May Day celebrations. While the month is not named for her, by the poet Ovid’s time, Flora, an Italian goddess, was widely perceived as the divine representative of May. As part of the Floralia, a sacrifice was made to Maia on May 1, and the two may be venerated together. Maia will also share altar space with Artemis. Maia’s sacred creature is the pig. She has festivals on May 1 and May 15. It has been intimated that Maia’s rites, like those of Flora, were licentious. May is widely considered to be the sexiest month, especially as its first moments are inaugurated during the raucous, erotic festivities of May Eve, also known as Beltane or Walpurgis.

The month’s sexual undercurrents are not always romantic. May also features feast days of several saints invoked against rape and sexual assault, including Anastacia of Brazil, Dymphna, Joan of Arc, and Solange.

Various folk traditions warn against marrying during this month. Various explanations for this superstition exist:

- Some Christian folk traditions suggest that, because the month is dedicated to Mary, its focus should be on chastity.
- Another rationale harks back to Juno, goddess of women's life cycles, who rules the sacrament of marriage. Marrying in June, a month named in her honor, is believed to provide exceptional marital luck. Not waiting the extra couple of days or weeks for June to begin may be construed as a slight to this powerful goddess.
- Maia and Flora, the goddesses of this month, are self-sufficient and sexually autonomous. This may have been perceived as a bad precedent for marriage in Roman-dominated areas, where women were expected to obey their husbands.
- Because the sexual energies of Earth are so high at this time, many believe that marrying in May potentially hardwires this rampant eroticism into the marital relationship itself, and thus it will be challenging to maintain fidelity.
- This month is also associated with commemorations of the dead. Too much celebrating might attract undue attention from less-than-friendly ghosts.

Angel of May: Ambriel or Amriel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Taurus and Gemini

Birds of the Month: nightingale, snowy egret

Birthstone of the Month: emerald

Flowers of the Month: hawthorn (*Craetagus spp.*, also known as the May Tree), iris, lily of the valley, mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), mayflower (*Epigaea repens*), roses, especially *Rosa x centifolia*, known as the May rose, and tulip.

Insect of the Month: Mayfly (*Ephemeroptera spp.*)

Watch out for the first rainfall of May, as it's widely believed to be a form of holy water. Bottle it and save it for magical use. See the [Glossary entry](#) for Holy Water for suggested uses.

May's Holidays and Extra Power Days

May Day, Beltane, Lei Day, Walpurgis: May 1

Saint George's Eve, Hidrellez: May 5

Feast of Saint George, Hidrellez: May 6

The Lemuralia: May 9, 11, 13

Moveable Feasts

Beltane: the holiday may be calculated to fall at the midpoint between the vernal equinox and the summer solstice or at the full moon closest to this date. Alternatively, it may be celebrated on the date coinciding with 15' Taurus.

May 1

"Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!"

See [January 1](#).

May Day

Beltane marks the first day of the bright half of the traditional Celtic calendar year. Earth's powers and energies are at their creative, generative, and reproductive peak. This is true of the entire day. Those with daytime obligations can avail themselves of the date's magic at night.

At sunrise or at the first sign of dawn, roll in May Day dew, a practice that allegedly bestows a year of enhanced beauty. Alternatively, gather dew with your hands and use it to bathe the face and body. May Day rain substitutes for dew. Dew or rain may be incorporated into May Day baths, together with fresh flowers and spring greens, such as basil, believed to generate financial prosperity. Flower essence remedies intended to stimulate joy may also be added to baths, as, for example, Gentian (*Bach Original Flower Remedy* or *Healing Herbs Bach Flower Essences*) or Golden Rose Essence (*Chalice Well Essences of Glastonbury*).

Please see [April 30](#) (May Eve) for additional information about this power-packed date. Many start celebrations at twilight on [April 30](#) and continue their revels until midnight on [May 2](#) or even until sunrise on that day.

This is traditionally a day for picnicking and for dancing around a May Pole. Some retain a permanent May Pole that is brought out for annual festivities. Others construct a new one each year—in this case, it is traditional to burn the May Pole once the celebration is over. Save the ashes and place them within a charm bag to serve as fertility amulets. (Creative endeavors can substitute for literal fertility.) It's also traditional to go *a-maying*—to venture into the woods and other wild areas to pick flowers, seek fairies, and engage in romantic encounters. (We no longer live in the “days of old,” and many plant species are endangered or on the brink of extinction: pick blossoms responsibly.)

Spirits of the Day

BONA DEA GODDESSES

Bona Dea, literally “good goddess,” is a class of goddesses who were the focus of women’s mystery traditions. Among these goddesses are Baubo, Fauna, and Maia, the goddess of May. Some believe Saint Agatha derives from a Bona Dea. (See [February 5](#).) References to *the* Bona Dea typically indicate Fauna. (See [December 5](#).) Men were forbidden entry to their shrines and rituals but could dedicate offerings and requests. Very little is thus known of these rites, as virtually all historical evidence from this era derives from male sources. An annual festival was held on May 1 at Rome’s Temple of Bona Dea on the Aventine Hill. Whether this refers exclusively to Maia, whose holy day is May 1, or to Fauna or to some or all of these goddesses is unknown. Any or all of the Bona Deas may be venerated today and their favors sought. Theoretically, they respond to any appeal, but their specialties are healing, protection, and justice for victims of sexual abuse and incest.

This is the only known Roman festival where women were permitted to perform blood sacrifices, drink strong sacrificial-grade wine, and gather at night—privileges usually reserved for men. Wine was apparently not permitted to be named or discussed; instead it was referenced euphemistically as “milk” or

“honey.” Mention of myrtle was likewise forbidden. (Myrtle and wine are mythically associated with the rape or death of Fauna at the hands of her father Faunus.)

Many Bona Dea are divine healers, and their temples and shrines were sources of healing. The creature most associated with Bona Deas is the serpent, symbol of wisdom and healing, and especially associated with women’s reproductive health. (Many families in the Roman region kept non-venomous snakes in their homes.) Modern devotees may maintain altars to these goddesses in any combination. Decorate with images of snakes. Do not offer them myrtle, and if you do offer wine, tell them it’s milk.

May 2

May is the flower month with a special focus on roses. Rose festivals were and still are held throughout the Mediterranean and elsewhere. The Rosalia, a rose festival dedicated to Flora and celebrated on May 23, as well as another one on the 24th, are featured in this book, but the month was once punctuated with rose festivals, moveable feasts timed to coincide with local harvests. Roses have an immense number of magical and spiritual uses, and this is a good month and day to incorporate them into your practices.

Rose Cleansing Ritual

Roses, among the most magical of plants, have numerous uses, from romance to healing. They may also be incorporated into cleansing rituals. Because of the beauty of the flower and its aroma, these are among the most pleasurable cleansing rituals. A simple yet potent cleansing ritual requires one long-stemmed rose and some water. This ritual may be used to cleanse people, locations, and animals, assuming no one, human or otherwise, will have a negative reaction to roses. Use pure spring water or sea water brought from the beach. Alternatively, add sea salt to spring water for an echo of the power of the sea. You may also use rose water or another floral water, such as the recipe for Notre Dame Water found in the entry for [April 28](#).

1. Simply dip the rose into the water and sprinkle as needed. (Please see the entry on [March 20](#) for more information on asperging.)

2. If cleansing space, walk clockwise, the direction of the strengthening sun, and sprinkle the water into corners, behind perpetually propped doors, and over thresholds, as well as any areas that just don't feel "right."
3. This is a gentle, loving cleansing, not an aggressive one. If you sprinkle people, do so gently and be aware of rose thorns.

If you are allergic to roses, substitute another long-stemmed plant for an asperging device, for example a pussy willow branch or a long stalk of rosemary.

May 3

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Saint of the Day

JESUS MALVERDE

Jesus Malverde, literally "Jesus the Bad Green," was a legendary Robin Hood-like figure from Sinaloa, Mexico. No evidence exists proving that a man named Jesus Malverde ever lived, but according to his legend, today is the anniversary of his death in 1909 and is celebrated as his annual feast. Malverde stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Betrayed by his closest friend for the bounty on his head, Jesus was brutally executed and denied proper funeral rites. Local people who felt pity for him eventually covered his corpse with a stone cairn, each individual contributing a rock, as they passed by.

Jesus Malverde is an extremely beloved, but also very controversial, folk saint. Some call him the Angel of the Poor, but others—including law enforcement—brand him as among the preeminent narcosaints. As with Santa Muerte, media descriptions are frequently sensationalized.

Sex workers were the first to make the pilgrimage to his grave, followed by other marginalized people. It's only in recent years that Jesus Malverde has developed a constituency among "respectable" people, but his devotees now follow all manner of professions or none at all and derive from all walks of life. Some of his earliest followers were drug traffickers and smugglers, hence his label as a narcosaint. This association lingers. Many venerate Jesus Malverde discreetly, as his recognizable image is likely to attract negative attention from law enforcement.

Jesus Malverde does not judge the lives of his devotees. In this, he is the perfect example of why many prefer folk saints to official or canonized saints. As he is not church-sanctioned, Jesus Malverde does what he likes, as he did while alive. Jesus Malverde works both sides of the fence: he protects those in illegal occupations, such as drug smugglers and human traffickers, but he also protects their victims or those who fear becoming victims. He helps break the shackles of addiction and protects loved ones from falling prey to predatory people. Those who wish to leave the drug trade or those who just wish to make a new start, especially where they may not be initially welcome, also call upon him. Jesus Malverde is especially associated with auto safety. Many credit him with protection from car accidents, as well as protecting hidden cargo. He is also invoked for healing, prosperity, and to escape from certain death.

Although he may be venerated at any time, today is the ideal time to honor him for favors received or to begin devotions. Once you know what he looks like, his image is extremely recognizable. He is portrayed as a brown-eyed handsome man with a suave mustache. He always looks cool, clean, and collected, although some votive images depict him in the moments before his death, a noose already around his neck with the other end of the rope flung over a tree branch. Jesus Malverde is often venerated together with either Guadalupe (see [December 12](#)) or Santa Muerte (see [October 31](#)). As his feast is followed in short order by Cinco de Mayo, a holiday that celebrates Mexican history, devotees may choose to continue festivities until May 6.

Malverde's color is green. Cannabis is his plant. Offer him flowers, wreaths, green candles, cigarettes, and liquor. Put pebbles on his altar. Give donations on behalf of the poor. To impress or to thank him for serious favors, obtain a tattoo of his image, set up a permanent altar for him, or visit his grave shrine in Culiacan, Mexico.

May 4

Festival of the Veneration of the Thorn

This modern holiday celebrates the hawthorn tree (*Crataegus spp.*), a member of the rose family, also known as the whitethorn or May Tree. Celebrate by planting or caring for one. Care should be taken not to damage hawthorns, at this or any other time, as they are believed to belong to the fairies. Do not remove branches or leaves without express, clear permission from the fairies, as it will incur their wrath. If in doubt, don't do it.

This is a good day to make petitions and seek protection or blessings from the fairies, as well as from the spirits of the trees. Hawthorns are often found near holy wells or other sacred sources of water and are believed to serve as their guardians.

If you have access to a living tree, make offerings by pouring libations at the base of the tree. Tie cloutie rags (scraps of cloth) to branches, accompanied by prayers and petitions.

If you do not have access to a hawthorn, you can still celebrate via visualization. Find an image of one or more hawthorns and use it as a focus of a visualization. You can visit fairies, perform rituals at a sacred well, or merely commune with the trees.

Saint of the Day

FLORIAN

In life, Florian (died c. 304) was a Roman general in what is now modern Austria, whose responsibilities included the supervision of firefighting brigades. He converted to Christianity and fell afoul of authority by refusing to sacrifice to the Roman state gods, which was perceived as treasonous. Tortured and executed, a millstone was attached to Florian's corpse, which was tossed into a river. He later appeared to a woman in a vision, advising her where she would locate his body and requesting that she arrange a Christian burial for him. Indeed, she found his corpse where he had said it would be, guarded by an eagle.

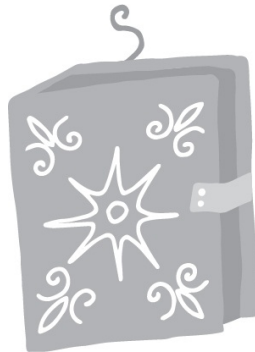
Today is Saint Florian's feast day. He is the patron saint of fire safety and firefighters. (Conversely, he is also invoked for protection against drowning and floods.) A spell invokes Saint Florian's blessing of fire safety. However, this is not an excuse to flaunt basic fire safety behavior. Candles should never be left

burning unattended. Although it may be cast at any time, today is an especially powerful time for it.

FLORIAN'S FIRE SAFETY SPELL

You will need a red candle and an image of a burning building or other fire that embodies your fears or nightmares:

1. Choose the image—you will need to print it out or have a tangible copy.
2. Dedicate a red candle to Florian: scratch “Saint Florian protect me” into the wax. Hold the candle in your hands while you focus on your request for protection.
3. Place the image under, near, or against the candle (but always aware of fire safety)
4. Light the candle. Sit with the candle while it burns, speaking to Florian, expressing your concerns and beseeching his aid.



May 5

In general, today, the fifth day of the fifth month, is considered an extremely auspicious date and a good time to begin new endeavors, as well as for all spellwork, but especially protection spells. In North African and Middle Eastern cosmologies, 5 is the number of protection, as in the five fingers of a hand, as expressed by a *hamsa* amulet. Any protection spell will be enhanced by the energy of the date, so choose your favorite. *However*, May is the month of roses, and so spells incorporating these flowers are doubly effective today.

Because of their beauty and their use in perfumery, roses are most frequently associated with romance, but these flowers have myriad magical uses. If you've ever had a personal encounter with a rose's sharp thorns, you'll appreciate why they are also associated with defensive magic. Although a rose of any color is suitable and, if this is a spontaneous spell, you can work with whatever is on hand, the most magically protective rose of all is red. Vividly red flowers, especially roses but also others, are associated with primordial menstrual power, widely considered to be the most powerful magic of all.

If you have the space, living red roses radiate protective energy. Plant them in your garden, especially around borders or flanking a path. Alternatively, strategically arrange potted plants.

You can also create a protective charm bag: place thirteen rose thorns inside a scarlet charm bag (flannel, silk, or satin are the ideal fabrics), along with dried rose petals, and a small black tourmaline or other black crystal. You may substitute a silver charm or bead for the crystal. Carry this with you to radiate protection. Pay attention if thorns start to poke through the bag—this may be a warning.

Cinco de Mayo

This is an easy date to remember, as *Cinco de Mayo* means “5th of May” in Spanish. This annual holiday commemorates the Mexican army's victory over occupying French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. It is *not* Mexican Independence Day, which falls in September. Outside of Mexico and especially in the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a celebration of all things Mexican. Mexican foods and beverages are consumed, and music, dance, and other cultural expressions enjoyed.

Those with an affinity for Mexican saints and spirits may wish to honor them today. Alternatively, it is an excellent opportunity to make their acquaintance and build relationships. Mexico is home to a huge pantheon of sacred beings, expressing diverse spiritual traditions. Here is but a sampling of some of the most beloved: Guadalupe, Santa Muerte, Tlazolteotl, Tezcatlipoca, Teresita, Jesus Malverde (whose feast was on May 3), Mayahuel, Mictecacihuatl, and Xochiquetzal.

Saints of the Day

SAINT GEORGE

In regions that resisted the Gregorian calendar, especially those under the influence of Byzantium, the eve of the feast of Saint George falls tonight, rather than on the Western Church's favored date, April 22. While the dates differ, celebrations are similar. True devotees may celebrate both dates or even the entire period from April 22 and concluding tomorrow. Please see the entries for [April 22](#) and [April 23](#) for more information.

Although Saint George and Al Khidr are Christian and Muslim saints respectively, it's highly likely that many of the traditions associated with their feasts, especially the magical ones, predate both religions. Even if you do not belong to those faiths or you eschew saints, you can still avail yourself of the radiant energy of this day. Celebrations of the Green Man tonight are also appropriate.

HIDRELLEZ

If you look at the entry for [April 22](#), you'll see that Saint George and Al Khidr are often identified with each other and may even be alter egos. It is natural that they would share an eve and a feast. However, in Turkey and those regions once part of the Ottoman Empire, this particular celebration of Al Khidr is distinguished from George's. It specifically commemorates the meeting of the prophets Al Khidr and Elijah, whose local names are Hizir and Ilyas, respectively. This may be an ancient meeting, or one reproduced annually. If you mash up the two names (in the manner of celebrity fusions such as Brangelina or Kimye), you get something akin to Hidrellez. For consistency, in this book, I refer to him as Al Khidr, but locally the name is pronounced Hizir or something similar. The celebration of Hidrellez begins tonight at sunset and continues through tomorrow.

Hidrellez marks the official spiritual start of spring. It's also an exceptionally lucky day. Many believe that a wish made either tonight or tomorrow is bound to come true. You may simply make a wish, but it's traditional to write them on small slips of paper, which are then tossed into living, flowing bodies of water—streams or rivers, for example. A more biodegradable approach might be to write them on leaves, substituting honey for ink.

The luckiness of the day is hardwired into the date—anyone can wish tonight, whether you celebrate Hidrellez or not.

Other rituals are date specific, too:

- Because Al Khizr drank the water of immortality, tonight is considered an auspicious time for healing rituals or rituals to promote longevity.
- If you have been saving water brought from a sacred site—a holy well, for instance—this would be a good night to use it. Incorporate into a bath or other cleansing rituals.
- Every living being is believed to begin a new cycle tonight. To kickstart this, fires are lit, whether regular bonfires or bonfires built of discarded wood, such as old furniture. Keeping the fire low, jump over the bonfire three times. This reputedly removes any old baggage (metaphorically speaking) but also promotes a year of good health.

May 6

Today is the Eastern Church's feast of Saint George. Those regions that resisted Gregorian calendar reforms may still celebrate this day, even if they now otherwise recognize the reforms. See [April 23](#) for more information about celebrating this holiday.

In regions that celebrate Saint George today, May 6 may be considered the “official” first day of spring. Weather is typically fine at this time of year, and celebrations are held outdoors. It is traditional to rise before dawn today and travel to a river or other body of water for ceremonial bathing. (Alternatively, those who celebrated last night, especially bonfire-jumpers, may conclude the night's festivities by bathing in the river before going home to rest.) Green branches and boughs are collected and may be used to slap each other for magical invigoration. (This is supposed to be fun and beneficial, not harmful, and similar in fashion to Russian and Finnish traditions of slapping sauna-goers with birch and oak branches. Be careful. It's easy to inadvertently injure someone.)

Herbs picked between Saint George's Western feast (April 23) and today are believed especially potent. If you have not yet harvested

any botanicals and wish to avail yourself of George's magic, today is your deadline.

Flower Baths

Alternatively, the day may be celebrated with magical flower baths. Any flowers may be used, but this is an excellent opportunity to avail yourself of the power of Saint George's flowers—those picked between April 23 and today. (Please use flowers that have not been sprayed with pesticides, as these can leach off into the bathwater.)

1. Run water for your bath, making sure that the temperature is comfortable.
2. Gather your blossoms together in a bowl. You may supplement with green leaves, too. Add essential oils and flower essences, if desired.
3. Whisper your desires over the flowers, speaking in the present tense: "I am happy" for example, or "I am loved," rather than "I will be happy."
4. When you're sure you've articulated your desires, add the flowers to the tub of water.
5. Get in and enjoy your magical bath. Visualizing your desires come true is beneficial, but you may also just luxuriate in the water.

May 7

Rose Banishing Spell

Roses serve to eliminate unpleasant entities or residual hauntings from your home. Although it works as a banishing spell—removing unwanted presences—it's actually more of a trap, similar to a genie caught in a bottle. This spell requires both petals and thorns. This spell may be cast at other times as needed, especially during a dark moon, but the seventh day of the fifth month is a propitious time for it.

1. Drop 25 rose thorns, one by one, into a bottle or jar. The number is derived from multiplying 5×5 . In addition, numerologically speaking, 25 may be broken down into $2 + 5$, which equals 7, an exceptionally magically potent number.
2. As you drop each thorn, murmur your directions to it—let the thorns know what you want from them. You can say something like “Evil presence, I banish you!” or, if you know precisely what or who you’re banishing, you may be more specific. (“Ghost of Great-Aunt Sally, leave here now!”) Speak quietly but firmly.
3. Continue murmuring your directions as you cover the thorns with rose petals, dropping them in one by one. (There’s no precise number for the petals—you will need enough to cover the thorns.) It is preferable to remove them directly from a rose head rather than to obtain packaged rose petals. The petals may be any color, although red is best.
4. Add a liquid to the jar so that it is approximately two-thirds full. The liquid may be rose water (preferably fresh), white rose hydrosol, Holy Water, Notre Dame Water (see [April 28](#) for the formula), or, in a pinch, salted spring water.
5. Once this is complete, leave the jar open and unattended overnight. However, if you are attempting to trap something truly frightening, it doesn’t hurt to keep vigil all night, praying and petitioning the powers that be, especially those spirits associated with roses. Just do it in another room.
6. Before dawn, quietly approach the jar or bottle and close tightly with a secure lid or stopper.
7. Wrap it up in dark cloth and bury it outside your home, as far away as possible.

May 8

White Lotus Day

Theosophists, as well as her fans and devotees, celebrate the anniversary of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who passed from this existence on May 8, 1871, as White Lotus Day. Known by her initials (HPB) or as Madame Blavatsky, she

was an incredibly influential author, medium, occultist, mystic, and world traveler, among the first Europeans to enter Tibet. Cofounder of the Theosophical Society, she is widely known as the Mother of the New Age. Blavatsky was among those primarily responsible for introducing Eastern concepts of karma and reincarnation to the West. Her best-selling books include *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

In her will, HPB requested that her friends gather together on the anniversary of her death. She suggested that they read from two books: the Bhagavad Gita and Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, first published in 1879, a time when very little was understood about Eastern spiritual practices in the West. Following HPB's wishes is one way of honoring her. Alternatively, you can read her own works or one of the many books about her. For those seeking to make direct spiritual contact, Madame Blavatsky accepts offerings of vodka, blinis, strong cigarettes, and black coffee.

On the first anniversary of her death, an unusual abundance of white lotuses was noted; the commemoration was subsequently dubbed White Lotus Day. The date has evolved into a day to contemplate the mysteries of the lotus, even by those who may not be devoted to HPB. Lotuses, exquisitely beautiful flowers, emerge from mud. Water plants, their pristine blossoms float above murky waters. They emerge over a roughly three-day period, blooming in the daytime, closing at night, radiating an aura of serenity. This has been understood as a metaphor for the soul's journey to enlightenment.

- Ancient Egyptians associated the lotus with the sun, rebirth, resurrection, and reincarnation.
- Buddhists associate the white lotus with fidelity, mental purity, and spiritual enlightenment. It's believed to represent the womb of the world.
- In Hinduism, the white lotus is associated with knowledge and is thus emblematic of deities similarly associated, such as Brahma and Sarasvati. (The goddess Lakshmi is typically associated with pink lotuses.)

Today is an excellent day to contemplate the lotus, whether a living plant or an image. It's also an auspicious day to cultivate actual lotuses or to work with essential oils, perfumes, or flower essences derived from them.

Archangel Michael

Although Michael's major feast day is September 29, as with many extremely popular sacred beings, multiple dates are assigned to him. May 8 is among these dates. For more information about this warrior archangel, humanity's defender, please see the entry for [September 29](#). Anything appropriate for that day may also be done today. Michael is the subject of many spells and rituals, as, for example, this protection spell.

Michael Archangel Protection Packet

1. Fill small bags with the spice grains of paradise (*Amomum malagueta*), also known as malagueta peppers.
2. Attach images of Archangel Michael to the front and back of these packets.
3. Place these packets on all entrances to your home or space facing outward that you would like Michael to protect.

An alternative method of creating these packets:

1. Stitch or staple three sides of two identically sized Michael holy cards together, making sure that the archangel's image faces out. Leave the top open. With each stitch or staple, repeat a simple request or prayer, something like "Michael Archangel, protect my family" or whatever it is that you desire.
2. Slip a small packet of grains of paradise between the cards. You can place them in a small plastic bag or wrap them in tissue or butcher's paper.
3. Sew, glue, or staple up the top.
4. Attach one packet to each of the entrances you'd like Michael Archangel to protect.

May 9

The Lemuria

Today marks the first day of the Lemuria, a Roman festival of the dead, also called the Lemuralia. It is the oldest of Rome's commemorations of the dead with some scholars suggesting that the festival predates the arrival of the

Romans in the region. It is a three-day holiday, celebrated on odd-numbered dates: May 9, 11, and 13. It would once have culminated on or just prior to the full moon in May.

Not all ghosts are alike. The Romans categorized their dead. Lemures are the malevolent, dangerous dead, who must be propitiated in order to avoid trouble for the living. These are not benevolent spirits to be welcomed. Instead, for varying reasons, these ghosts carry grudges. Perhaps they died violently or abruptly. Those who drowned or were executed were deemed likely to become Lemures. Suicides were also likely candidates. The Romans believed that those who died childless were fated to become Lemures. Even if you had children, if ghosts no longer had living descendants to honor them, they were believed to become filled with the rage, restlessness, and desolation of the Lemures. Lemures may also be resentful family ghosts, come back to visit their relatives.

The three dates of the Lemuria belong to these ghosts. Today, the dead walk the Earth. Their wandering spirits are honored. Hungry ghosts are fed, if only to appease them and avert future problems.

The festival is traditionally celebrated with a midnight ritual, dating back to old Roman times. Each night during the first moments of the feast day, the head of a household walks barefoot around the home nine times while tossing black beans over a shoulder and repeating the incantation, “I send these. With these beans, I redeem me and mine,” nine times.

Tonight, as well as the other nights of the Lemuria, is a good time for séances and other attempts at soothing and appeasing the restless dead. For those with haunted houses, this is a good time to determine why ghosts are restless. If making offerings to the wandering dead, do so outside your home.

May 10

Saint of the Day

SAINT SOLANGE

Saint Solange is the matron saint of victims of rape and femicide, of which she, herself, was a victim. Today is her feast day.

Saint Solange is invoked to protect against rape and sexual violence, as well as to provide justice for its victims. She is also invoked to relieve drought and to banish demons. Decorate her altar with images of the sheep who are this

eternally young shepherdess' constant companions. Offer her spring water and objects a spiritually inclined young girl might like, as well as replicas of weapons to defend herself and us.

May 11

The Lemuria

Today is the second day of the Lemuria, the Roman festival of the dead. (Please see [May 9](#) for more details.) Rituals of May 9 may be repeated or done now instead. If you experience unpleasant hauntings, whether in your home, your dreams, or otherwise, tonight is a good time for action. Necromantic activities such as séances, automatic writing, or utilizing a spirit board may help determine what the dead require in order to depart and leave you in peace. Keep an open jar of honey nearby, as you attempt contact, in order to sweeten the ghosts' moods—discard it outside your home after contact has concluded. Do not consume or otherwise use it.

Blackthorn Day

Before calendar reforms, today would have been Beltane: some old associations linger. Today is profoundly associated with the blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) among those trees most closely identified with fairies. The fairies specifically associated with blackthorns are among the most dangerous and temperamental. Do *not* cut a branch from the tree today or harvest it in any way. (At any other time, it's necessary to request the fairies' permission, even before gathering fallen leaves or thorns. Ideally, this tree is only ritually harvested and very carefully so.) To appease fairies or to sweeten their nature toward you, offer libations of sloe gin, if available. (Sloes are the fruit of the blackthorn tree.) Alternatively, if unavailable, offer libations of milk and honey.

May 12

Saints of the Day

ANASTACIA OF BRAZIL

Today is the feast day of Blessed Anastacia, an incredibly popular folk saint, venerated by at least twelve million people. Despite the honorific “Blessed” she has *not* been beatified by the Vatican, nor is canonization in process. Although Anastacia has Roman Catholic devotees, she is also venerated by Spiritists, Umbandists, Pagans, and those unaffiliated with any religion or spiritual tradition.

If you see Anastacia’s votive imagery, you will not forget it, nor will you confuse her with anyone else. Anastacia is portrayed as a beautiful, serene, dignified Black woman wearing a brutal face mask and iron collar. This is the *only* image used to represent her, its only variant the color of her eyes, which may be either brown or blue.

The subject of a lengthy, complex, and evolving mythos, Anastacia is believed to radiate healing power. Flowers, candles, and other objects placed on altars dedicated to her are believed to absorb her power and may be used to heal. (Favored flowers include white carnations and roses in any color.) She is an exceptionally loving, kind, and generous saint. Anastacia is invoked to prevent rape and assault. She protects against domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and abusive employers of all kinds. The special matron saint of nurses, who can request that she enhance their own healing skills, Anastacia is also claimed by hairdressers, especially those who promote natural hair, and entrepreneurs, especially women. The traditional vow is to name your enterprise after Anastacia if she fulfills your request.

PANCRAS

Saint Pancras is the saint of the impossible. If you’ve been told it can’t be done or if even you think your request is impossible, request Pancras’ aid.

Pancras is potentially *everyone’s* saint but is especially devoted to children and orphans. He is a master healer, whose specialties are headaches, seizure disorders, and pancreatic cancer. As Pancras reputedly hates false witnesses and perjury, he may be invoked to protect against it. Oaths are traditionally sworn in his name, as he’s believed guaranteed to punish those who swear falsely.

Possibly because of his association with impossibilities, Pancras has become a go-to saint for those seeking parking spaces in busy urban areas. When you need one, just ask him nicely in simple, straightforward language. (“Please Saint Pancras. I need a parking space now.”) If he comes through for you, light a white candle for him at your earliest opportunity.

Pancras can also help you land a job.

Saint Pancras Employment Spell

1. Place an image of Saint Pancras at the highest possible spot in your home—atop a bookcase or a refrigerator, for instance.
2. Place fresh parsley within a glass of water and put this before his image.
3. Light a white candle for Saint Pancras and explain to the saint how badly you need a job. Give him the specifics.

SAFETY NOTE: Always be aware of fire safety. If possible, place the candle beside the image and parsley. Otherwise, place it as close as safely possible. And if you have high-jumping cats who may be curious about the parsley, then only keep it beside the image while under your supervision.



May 13

The Lemuria or Lemuralia

Today is the third and final day of the Lemuria. Please see entries for the previous dates, [May 9](#) and [11](#), for further details. It is the last opportunity, at least during this holiday, to propitiate these hungry ghosts, who should then be on their way. To encourage them to leave, bang pots and pans, or otherwise evoke the sound of clattering metal. This should make them feel unwelcome and drive them from inside your home. (Please see [April 9](#) for more information on sound cleansing.)

These attempts at exorcism should be focused on the inside of your home or any space you otherwise occupy. The ghosts may linger briefly outside. As long as they are not present in your home, there is no need to agitate or aggravate these ghosts, who remain dangerous and volatile. Attempts to appease them are

intended to prevent them from causing harm, especially now, at the peak of their powers, not to transform them into friendly ghosts. Do not encourage them to stay and remove any offerings left outside once the Lemuria is done. Do not bring these indoors but dispose of them outside, possibly by feeding to birds, fish, or turtles or by just throwing them away.

May 14

Saint and Spirit of the Day

MARIA DE PADILLA, QUEEN OF QUEENS

When Maria de Padilla, the secret wife of Pedro I, King of Castile and Leon, died on this day in 1361, some already perceived her as a goddess of love. Others considered her a powerful sorceress, and still others damned her as a demon. As a once-living person, who continues to assist and communicate with the living, she might also be considered a folk saint.

In life, Maria was tolerant of Spain's minorities and encouraged Pedro to behave similarly. She was and is particularly beloved by Spain's *Gitano* community (Gypsies or Roma), who viewed her as a fairy queen surrounded by a court of beautiful spirits. When the Portuguese forcibly transported many Gitanos to Brazil, Maria traveled with them. There she evolved into Maria Padilha, a scarlet goddess, now incorporated into various Afro-Brazilian traditions.

Spanish magic spells frequently invoke a cast of characters who are summoned to do the spellcaster's bidding. These include various demons, Barabbas, Martha the Dominator, and Maria. In the most famous spell invoking her, she is paired with the demon Asmodeus.

Maria de Padilla's Lodestone of Power Love Spell

The spell requires a bit of lodestone dust and some brandy or other alcoholic beverage. It is an old and traditional spell that requires you to swallow a bit of the powder. You only need the teensiest smidgen. Place a lodestone in a mortar and grind with the pestle, focusing on your desire.

1. Before retiring for the night, add lodestone dust to a shot glass of brandy or another beverage.

2. Just before going to sleep, chant the following:

*To the Mount of Olives, one day I did ride
Three little black goats before me I spied
Those three little goats on three carts I laid
Three black cheeses from their milk I made
One I bestow on the Lodestone of Power
So that it will save me from all ills this very hour
The second to Maria de Padilla I give
And to her court of ladies about her who live
The third I fetch for Asmodeus the lame
That he fetch for me whomever I name!*

3. Now shout out the name of the lover you desire.

4. Drink the potion and go to sleep. Pay attention to your dreams. It's advisable to remain silent until after you awake and record whatever you recall of your dreams.

Although the spell does not require it, it would be polite to make an offering to Maria de Padilla at the same time. She enjoys luxuries fit for a queen: champagne in a beautiful glass and long-stemmed roses. Reputedly a brilliant, well-educated woman, she may enjoy creative offerings as well.

SAINT CORONA

Long an obscure saint, Corona shot to prominence in 2020, magically linked to the coronavirus via her name. Today is her feast. Not previously perceived as a healing saint, she is traditionally associated with finances, money, and gambling. Officially, she is the matron saint of treasure hunters, as a treasure hunter once very publicly credited her for his success. Documentation of Saint Corona dates to the fourth century. Legends vary, but the basic tale is that witnessing a Roman soldier being tortured to death for his Christian faith, she stepped forward to comfort him and was executed alongside him. Depending on legend, she and Victor, the soldier, may have been married. The two have historically been venerated together, but in the context of healing and pandemics, Corona stands alone.

Corona means “crown.” Before her death, the saint beheld a vision of two crowns falling from Heaven, which she interpreted as crowns of martyrdom for herself and Victor. Coronaviruses are so called because, under electron microscope examination, each virion is covered by spikes perceived to resemble

a crown. With the advent of the 2020 pandemic, internet searches for “corona” brought Saint Corona to the fore and she went viral virtually overnight, with many hailing her as the matron saint of pandemics. It is not unusual for saints to develop new patronages—both Joan of Arc and Claire are saints of media that did not exist during their lifetimes: radio and TV, respectively. Offer Saint Corona crowns, tiaras, or images of them when seeking her healing assistance. It may be especially effective to request her aid with the economic impact of pandemics, as this combines her old and new fields of interest.

May 15

The Mercuralia

The Mercuralia, the Roman feast of Mercury, held today, honors that deity, as well as his mother Maia, the goddess of the month. The date coincides with Mercury’s birthday, the Ides of May. The Mercuralia is also a festival for merchants to honor their patron deity and to perform cleansing rituals intended to encourage better business. The tools of the ritual are traditionally a bay laurel branch with which to sprinkle (aspurge) blessed water.

In days of yore, water for the Mercuralia was drawn from a spring associated with Mercury, the *aqua Mercurii*, which ran alongside the Circus Maximus. Water was collected in jars that had been ritually purified and fumigated. Merchants would sprinkle this blessed water over their own heads and those of their families and employees, as well as over their wares, ships or other modes of transport, and their places of business. If you seek Mercury’s blessings and would like to approximate the ritual, consider what type of blessed water to use. You can simply use spring water, or you may infuse water with herbs considered to be under the rulership of Mercury, such as anise, chervil, cinquefoil (a.k.a. five-finger grass, apropos for the Lord of Thieves), dill, or fennel. You might also soak bay laurel leaves in spring water. If you have access to a bay laurel tree or even fresh bay laurel leaves on stems, you can reproduce the asperging tool.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

DYMPHNA

Saint Dymphna first emerged as a saint in the thirteenth century in what is now

modern Belgium, after relics identified as hers were discovered there. She is described as a seventh-century Celtic princess from Britain, Brittany, or Ireland—all three locations claim her.

When Dymphna was a child, her beautiful mother died. Her father wished to remarry, but none of the prospective candidates could compare to his memories of his wife. As Dymphna grew older, she grew to strongly resemble her mother, and her father noticed. Resisting his advances, Dymphna fled to what is now Belgium.

Her father pursued Dymphna and caught up with her. He begged her to return home as his bride, but she refused, and so he beheaded her.

Today is Dymphna's feast. Her emblem is a downturned sword. She is the matron saint of those who endure or have survived incest, rape, and sexual abuse, as well as runaways, somnambulists, those seeking refuge, those suffering from mental illness or neurological disorders, therapists, mental health professionals, and others who care for the mentally ill. Dymphna is also renowned as an exorcist. She heals sleepwalking, seizure disorders, and mental illness and protects those who suffer from these. Traditional offerings include head-shaped *milagros* and charms, as well as skull-shaped and other candles. If she performs a huge miracle for you, a visit to her shrine at Saint Dymphna Church in Gheel, Belgium, may be in order.

MAIA

For more information about Maia, please see the opening pages for [May](#). She may be venerated today or in company with her son. Today is the second of her two feast days in the month named in her honor. When a lunar calendar was in use, she would have been honored at the new and full moons in May, and this may still be done.

Mercury, a masquerader, sometimes lurks behind the guises of other deities and saints including Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Expedite, and even Archangel Michael. If you're fond of any or all of them, today is a good day to honor or invoke them as well.

MERCURY

Today, the Ides of May, is celebrated as this trickster spirit's birthday. The Roman deity Mercury has absorbed much of the myth and iconology of Greek deity, Hermes. However, they are not identical and, although now closely identified with each other, their origins differ. In his earliest incarnations, Hermes was a rustic fertility deity. Mercury is an urbanite, associated with merchants, commerce, and all things mercantile.

Mercury is usually portrayed wearing the winged cap and sandals and carrying the caduceus (two snakes wrapped around a staff) inherited from Hermes. He may also wear a cloak and broad traveler's hat like Odin, another deity with whom Mercury is identified. Unique to Mercury, however, is the full purse he carries—a moneybag—symbolic of his association with merchants, but also of his ability and willingness to bestow prosperity upon his devotees.

His planet is Mercury. His day is Wednesday (*mercredi* in French) and his metal is quicksilver (mercury). His bird is the rooster. Mercury is the patron deity of merchants, but also of thieves. He guards the shop and the shoplifter. Mercury favors the quick and clever. The thieves he protects are sleight-of-hand artists and con-people, *not* thugs or muggers or those who resort to brute force. Others able to claim his protection include forgers, counterfeiters, check kitters, and perjurers, although he is also invoked to protect against these dangers. Mercury plays both sides of the fence. He also favors occultists, astrologers, ceremonial magicians, and alchemists, whether charlatans, the real deal, or a little of both. Those born today or under the natal signs Gemini and Virgo, or while Mercury was retrograde, may consider themselves under Mercury's patronage, too.

Mercury is a sharp-witted prankster who loves wordplay. He may be requested to help with virtually anything, but be very careful with how requests are worded. Speak simply and precisely to him and make sure that your words accurately reflect your needs and desires.

May 16

Saint of the Day

JI GONG, THE MAD MONK

Ji Gong, the poet and Buddhist saint (*arhat*), who died on this day in 1209, was a monk at Ling Yin Temple in China, during the Song Dynasty. As he disregarded

standard rules of abstinence, consuming meat and alcohol, he was widely known as Crazy Monk Ji or the Mad Monk. Although he appeared unkempt and did not behave in typical monk fashion, he was a scholar and a gifted healer and herbalist who developed a reputation as a guardian of the poor, who were the first to call him Ji Gong (Lord Ji) and to describe him as a Living Buddha.

Following his death, he ascended to sainthood and was given the title *Jiang Long Luo Han* or “the Dragon Descended Arhat.” Also venerated as a deity by some Taoists and devotees of Chinese folk religion, Ji Gong is closely associated with oracular spirit writing, such as Fuji or the Chinese planchette. Tonight is an excellent time for spirit communications of all kinds. Ji Gong’s attributes are a broken calamus fan and a gourd filled with wine. Carved sandalwood images of Ji Gong are brought to Lin Yin Temple to be blessed. Devotees also visit his temple and ancestral pagoda at Huangzhou’s West Lake.

May 17

Art Magic

Virtually anything can be used as a component of spellcasting, and artwork is no exception. The history of magical art dates back at least as far as prehistoric cave art. Through the ages, many artists have created “magical art,” as well as magically themed art, such as Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli, who died on this day in 1510 and whose painting *Primavera (Spring)* features portraits of Flora and Mercury.

Visual art can be created for magical purposes by focusing on your spell’s goal as you paint or by incorporating magical symbols and sigils. However, you can also incorporate existing art into your rituals and spells via active or passive methods.

Active methods include visualization. See yourself entering an image, interacting with it, and then, very crucially, leaving. For example, if you sought spiritual advice, you could “enter” the Tarot High Priestess card, converse with the priestess, bid her thank you and goodbye, and then return to your conscious self *outside* the card. A passive method is to simply absorb a magical painting’s radiant energy.



International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

This annual event is a worldwide celebration of sexual and gender diversities, first created in 2004 to call attention to the violence and discrimination suffered by LGBTQ people worldwide. The date was chosen to commemorate the decision on this day in 1990 by the World Health Organization to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. For those seeking to incorporate a spiritual component, the following are but some of the spirits and saints who serve as guardians of varying aspects of the LGBTQ communities: Bahuchara, Kybele, Gedé Nibo, Logunedé, Oshumaré, Erinle, Santa Muerte, Sarita Colonia, Saint Sebastian, Mychal Judge, and Saints Sergius and Bacchus.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT PASCHAL BAYLON

Paschal Baylon (c. 1540–May 17, 1592) began life as an illiterate shepherd, but, having taught himself to read and write at age twenty-four, he was accepted as a lay brother by the Franciscans. He spent the rest of his life serving as a porter and servant in Franciscan friaries throughout Spain. Renowned for his kindness to the poor while alive, he is now a major miracle maker. A great saint, he may be invoked for anything; however, Pachal Baylon has two specialties. A great healer, he is invoked to protect individuals and communities from serious illness and epidemics. He is also the saint of the kitchen. Anything that occurs in a kitchen, from cooking and baking to family feuds and reconciliations, is under his dominion. Ask him to bless yours. The kitchen is where this saint is happiest, and it is the ideal place for his altar or votive imagery. In addition to the standard candles and incense, devotees cook for him. His color is Franciscan brown.

Paschal Baylon is also associated with death. In 1630, over three decades after his death, and decades before he was canonized (although the process had begun by then), an apparition dressed in Franciscan robes, who identified himself as Paschal Baylon, appeared to an indigenous man in a region devastated by plague in what is now modern Guatemala. The apparition announced that he

would end the plague if the local populace converted to Christianity. He also regretfully informed the man that he would die of plague in nine days. The man notified the local priest, who organized a very well-attended mass honoring Paschal Baylon. The plague abruptly terminated, although the man did die as foretold. The event solidified Paschal Baylon's reputation as a healer. He is also traditionally invoked to give three days' notice of death, so that devotees may organize their affairs and obtain last rites. In addition, however, the event served as a portal for one or more forbidden Mayan deities to reemerge, who now share Paschal's name and feast day.

The Spanish variant of the name Paschal is *Pascual*, which resembles *Pascuar*, the name of a Mayan sacred ritual dance, forbidden by Franciscan missionaries, along with the rest of traditional Mayan religion and spirituality.

EL REY PASCHAL

El Rey Paschal means "The King Paschal." Also known as El Rey Pascual, San Pascualito, and San Pascual Bailar ("Dancing Saint Pascual"), he is a pre-Conquest Mayan deity who shares the name and feast day of canonized saint Paschal Baylon, as well as his associations with healing and death. However, they are two distinct sacred beings: one is a canonized saint from Spain, and the other is an ancient Mayan spirit who now manifests as a crowned skeleton and is typically portrayed standing with one foot atop a globe or sphere. Various legends regarding his origins exist: he may always have been a deity, or he may have had a human incarnation as a shaman king, who ruled during the beginning of the Spanish Conquest. In life, he was a shaman, able to straddle the realms of the living and the dead. In death, he continues to do the same. El Rey Paschal is a psychopomp—a spirit who guides dead souls to their next abode. Like Saint Paschal Baylon, he gives devotees warnings of death, appearing in dreams and visions so that affairs and souls can be readied. (Warnings tend to be audible: the sound of knocking or the creaking of wagon wheels.) El Rey Paschal is also a healer, capable of rescuing the seriously ill from death's door. The patron of modern mediums and shamans, El Rey Paschal can facilitate roundtrip travel between the realms of the living and the dead. If you are having trouble contacting the dead, he can help.

Deities in the form of skeletons exist throughout Central and South America. Although he is a skeleton spirit from Latin America, El Rey Paschal is not the famous Santa Muerte, but a distinct sacred being.



May 18

International Museum Day

This annual celebration's goal is to raise public awareness of museums and the roles they play. Many museums serve as repositories for sacred and magical articles. In some cases, such as the Temple of Dendur within New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, entire shrines may be accessed. Museums are excellent venues to commune with the sacred or to simply receive the radiated power of sacred objects and votive imagery. Many museum collections may now be accessed online, as well as in person.

May 19

Saint of the Day

SAINT YVES

Yves Hélor (October 17, 1253–May 19, 1303), a prominent Breton attorney, resented the lawyer jokes that were as popular in his time as in ours. (Example: *What do you call an honest lawyer? An oxymoron.*) He believed that if attorneys only had their own patron saint, they would receive more respect. He traveled to Rome to request a patron saint directly from the pope. The pope was not overly impressed with the request, not seeing an obvious candidate. Instead, he told Yves to walk blindfolded around the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, repeating a set number of Hail Marys. When he was done, he was to put his hand on the nearest statue, which would represent a new patron saint of attorneys. Yves did as he was told but was greeted by the sound of bystanders' laughter. Removing his blindfold, he discovered that he had inadvertently created his own lawyer joke: his hand was atop the devil beneath Archangel Michael's feet. In despair, he retreated to his rooms, where he died. The pope did not forget him, however, and Yves, himself, became patron saint of attorneys.

Even in life, he was credited with miracles. That continues today. Yves is an extremely popular saint in Brittany, the local equivalent of Saint Patrick. Although today, the anniversary of his death, is his feast, Breton celebration may last days longer. Yves is also the patron of notaries, paralegals, orphans, and abandoned children. Traditional offerings include candles and good deeds on behalf of the poor. If he performs a major miracle for you, visit his shrine in Tréguier, Brittany, or offer donations toward its upkeep.

Saint Yves Dedication Curse

In the centuries since his death, Yves has become closely associated with Breton witchcraft, sorcery, and cursing. A traditional method of cursing someone is to deliver your target to him.

1. Remember, Yves is a lawyer. Light a candle for him and speak to the saint: make your case as to *why* your target should be cursed.
2. It's believed that if Saint Yves finds your claims justified, then your target is not long for this world. However, if Saint Yves does not find it justified, the curse will backfire onto the curser, who will receive the punishment instead.

May 20

World Bee Day

World Bee Day is held annually in order to celebrate and honor bees and explore their crucial role in existence. Among Earth's major pollinators, bees increase crop yield and promote food security and nutrition. Without bees, many crops will fail, potentially leading to worldwide disaster. The population of bees has been decimated by pesticides and habitat loss. In addition, the loss of bees means the loss of honey, bee pollen, beeswax, propolis, Royal Jelly, and apitherapy.

Sacred beings associated with bees and honey include the beautiful female spirits Oshun and Austeja, as well as Saints Rita and Gobnait. In addition, bees are often considered to be the reincarnated souls of priestesses of a goddess (the queen bee), especially Aphrodite.

Today may be spent planting pesticide-free gardens for bees or otherwise working on their behalf. Among the plants considered beneficial for bees are herbs like coriander, sage, lavender, and thyme, plus flowers like sunflowers, hollyhocks, poppies, zinnias, and geraniums. Add their dried leaves and petals to a charm bag that can be carried to attract sweetness to your life.



Honey Jar Spells

Without bees, there is no honey, a major component of spells. “Honey jars” are a genre of spell, rather than one specific spell. Once you comprehend the concept behind them, you can easily create your own honey jar spells for virtually any purpose.

Honey has two characteristic qualities: it's sweet and it's sticky. It entraps but pleasantly. A honey jar spell is used when you wish to sweeten someone's feelings for you—this might be a lover or a family member but might also be the bank manager you hope will approve your loan or the teacher who decides whether you graduate. There are numerous ways of concocting a honey spell: the crucial element is the sweetening agent. If you do not have honey, agave syrup or molasses potentially works, but because honey is a natural preservative, it also potentially preserves the effects of your spell in a way that other sweeteners do not.

What follows is an example of a honey spell, but feel free to improvise as inspired or needed.

1. You can work with a small, lidded jar already containing honey or with an empty jar into which you will pour honey.
2. Articulate the goal of your spell as clearly as possible. Who is your target? (If multiple people, create a separate jar for each.)
3. Write the name of your target on a small slip of paper and insert it into the jar. Alternatively, you can incorporate your target's business card or even a copy of a small photo of the person.
4. Add whatever other ingredients you think will assist your success. For a love spell, this might be a drop of menstrual blood or some crushed, powdered rosebuds. You may wish to incorporate a hair from your target's head or elsewhere on their body. If you would like a roaming mate to stay home *and* be pleasant, you might incorporate their shoelace. If you wish to control someone's decisions or actions, perhaps add a bit of sweet flag (calamus) and licorice root (the plant, *not* the candy), the primary components of domination spells.
5. When your jar is complete, place the lid on top and tighten it. Some stop at this point. The jar can be placed in a discreet place, such as the back of a drawer or closet, but it can also be buried in the ground or within a flowerpot.
6. However, others prefer to further empower the spell by lighting a candle placed atop the jar's flat lid. Simply light the candle or, prior to lighting, rub the candle with appropriate oils and/or scratch names, symbols, and sigils into the wax. Remember, *always* be aware of fire safety. A spell is intended to improve your life, not burn down your house or cause injury or loss of life.

May 21

Saint of the Day

SAINT HELENA

The historical Flavia Julia Helena Augusta (c. 250–August 18, 330), the future Saint Helena, was the mother of Constantine the Great, the Roman Emperor who first legalized Christianity and set it on its path toward becoming a state religion.

Helena's own religious beliefs are mysterious: she may have been a priestess of Aphrodite, a sincere Christian convert, a cynical one, or any combination. Mother and son may be venerated together, but Helena plays an important role in folk magic all by herself.

In 326, Helena was implicated in a Roman scandal regarding the murder of her daughter-in-law. In response, Helena went on a lengthy pilgrimage to Jerusalem, whether in genuine expiation or because she needed to get out of town. During her travels, she did not keep a low profile but founded basilicas in Bethlehem and on the Mount of Olives. In 328, she claimed to have found fragments of the True Cross (the cross on which Jesus was crucified) in a crypt below the recently destroyed Temple of Aphrodite, as well as three nails from the crucifixion, and the Spear of Destiny, which had pierced Christ's side. She brought all these back to Rome. On her way home to Rome, Saint Helena threw one nail into the sea for the salvation of drowned sailors. She kept another for herself as a holy relic, and then dedicated the last nail to the lovers of the world, so that they would be preserved from heartache. That's the justification for why Saint Helena is among the saints most associated with love magic. Some also believe that ancient goddesses of love may linger beneath the mask of this beautiful saint, for example Aphrodite or her namesake, Helen of Troy. Isis, another guardian of travelers, may also lie beneath Saint Helena's mask, as well as Juno.

Helena is now the matron saint of travelers, shoppers—especially of antiques—archaeologists, and treasure hunters, as well as of divorcees and those in complicated or challenging relationships. Decorate Saint Helena's altar with cross-shaped candles, antiques, jewelry, and beautiful objects. Her favored color is pink (if cross candles are unavailable, pink candles will do.)

Helena has two major annual feast days. Today's is traditionally shared with her son, Saint Constantine. Her second feast coincides with the anniversary of her death on August 18.

Saint Helena Uncrossing Spell

The folk magic term “crossed conditions” refers to a type of magical stasis, often caused by curses, in which a person is “crossed” or blocked at all turns, unable to succeed or progress or shed the heavy cross they bear. Because of her connection with the True Cross, Helena is believed capable of fixing this situation. If you feel that you are crossed or if your cross is simply too heavy to bear any longer, invoke Saint Helena's aid.

1. You will require a white cross-shaped candle, readily available from

spiritual merchants, online or in stores. It is not necessary to be a Christian to cast this spell; the cross is intended to represent your condition.

2. Scratch the name of the person who requires help into the candle wax. (If more than one, each individual requires their own cross candle.)
3. Dedicate the candle to Saint Helena and request that your crossed condition vanish in the same way that a candle vanishes when burned. Prayers and invocations while the candle burns are helpful.
4. Dedicate a gift to Saint Helena when you cast the spell and promise her something better once you're sure that the spell has worked. (You can give her a deadline that enables you to feel sure that you are now free of your crossed condition.)

Helena's Love Spell

1. Chant the following while holding a candle. Use a plain white candle or a figure candle representing the object of your desire. (Figure candles are wax candles in the shape of a naked man or woman and are easily available from a spiritual merchant.) If desired, you may prepare the candle by rubbing it with magical oils or by carving your target's name in the wax.

*Most loving mother of Emperor Constantine,
To the Mount of Olives, you did go with three nails of Lord Jesus Christ
The first nail you threw into the sea for the salvation of drowned sailors
The second nail you drove into a dedicated object
The third nail I drive into (your spell target's name) heart,
So that (repeat the name) is unable to eat, sleep, rest, or have relations
with another,
Nor have one single moment of peace until (repeat the name) surrenders
at my feet,
Please Saint Helena, if you grant my desire, I will be your most
dedicated devotee.*

2. Gently push a nail into the candle. If using a figure candle, situate it by the heart. Although the spell describes "driving" the nail and you may visualize doing it with force, many candles will break to the point of being unusable unless your touch is gentle.
3. Place the candle on an altar set up for Helena. If she fulfills your desire, the altar should be considered permanent.

May 22

Saints and Spirit of the Day

SAINT HELEN LUYDDOG OF CAERNARFON

This Saint Helen is frequently confused or conflated with Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, whose feast was celebrated yesterday. However, there are two Saint Helens. Both were politically prominent women while alive, while in the afterlife both may serve as masks for important goddesses, although not the same ones. Today's Saint Helen is also called Saint Ellen, which gives us a clue. (See [below](#).)

The historical Helen of Caernarfon was the wife of Roman General Magnus Maximus (c. 355–August 28, 388.). Little is known of Helen's life. Welsh legends describe her as an indigenous British princess. Helen encouraged her husband to build roads through Wales, ostensibly so that their armies could travel with greater ease and speed. Indeed, there are roads and sacred wells throughout Wales named for this saint, but they predate her by centuries. They were not built by this woman. It is possible that she was named in honor of the primordial British goddess Elen, also associated with roads. Saint Helen is sometimes described as akin to a “British Saint Christopher” and she is a guardian of travelers.

ELEN OF THE ROADS

Since the late twentieth century, there has been a major revival of the veneration of the goddess Elen of the Roads, believed to have been worshipped in Britain since at least the Paleolithic. She may or may not be the same being as Saint Helen, who may have been named in her honor. Today, the saint's official feast, may also be used to honor the goddess. Elen is a goddess of the paths forged by reindeer that preceded modern roads. Her roots as a reindeer and deer goddess survive in her iconography, often based on visionary experiences, in which she appears as an antlered woman or even as an upright deer. Once worshipped throughout the British Isles and perhaps beyond, she may also be at the root of Elaine, the Grail King's daughter. Elen is associated with roads, crossroads, ley lines, springs, wells, waterfalls, and sacred groves. Her symbols include antlers, a basket filled with apples, and fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*). More information about this mysterious goddess may be found in the 2015 book by Caroline Wise, *Finding Elen: The Quest for Elen of the Ways*.

SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

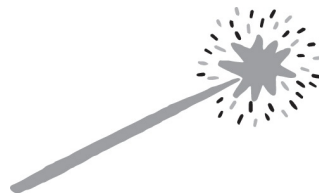
Like Saint Jude, Saint Philomena, and a few other saints, Rita (c. 1381–May 22, 1457) is considered a “saint of impossible causes,” meaning that there is no miracle she is believed incapable of providing, no matter how unlikely or impossible it seems.

Rita signals her presence or her response to petitions via the unexpected appearance of pink roses or the scent of flowers when no flowers are present. On May 22, roses are brought to Saint Rita’s shrines and blessed, before being dried. Once they are ready, the dried roses are packaged and distributed worldwide. On a personal level, you can dedicate roses to Rita today, placing them on her altar. Water in the vase, as well as dried rose petals, stems, and thorns, can be saved for magical and devotional purposes.

Although Rita is reputedly able to provide any miracle, she has a unique specialty. Rita grants protection from the partner or ex-partner (whether spouse, fiancé, significant other, or more casual) who will not go away but continues to frighten or cause harm. You may simply request her help, but there is a spell specifically associated with this.

Saint Rita, Save Me from My Ex

1. Dedicate a bouquet of roses to Saint Rita.
2. Place them in a vase.
3. Cast a circle of baking soda around the vase.
4. Standing beside or before this vase, burn a paper representative of your relationship: for example, a marriage certificate or a prom or wedding photo. You may use a copy of the document, as it needs to be destroyed completely.
5. Invoke Saint Rita’s aid as the paper burns.
6. Sprinkle the ashes on or within the baking soda circle.



May 23

The Rosalia

The name “Rosalia” refers to festivals of roses, and there were and still are many scheduled this month, although many do not have fixed dates but are timed to coincide with that year’s harvest. Today’s Rosalia, dedicated to the goddess Flora, occurs annually on this date, however. Its purpose is trifold: honor the goddess, venerate the dead, luxuriate in roses. Purple violets are the secondary or accompanying flower of the day. If you seek a color scheme for the day, it’s red and purple.

- Lay or plant roses at gravesites and family tombs today.
- Plant or cultivate roses elsewhere, too.
- Weave rose wreaths and garlands.
- Cast spells incorporating roses.
- Cook or eat dishes featuring edible roses, rose petal jam, rose hips, or rosewater.

Spirits of the Day

CHELONE

Chelone began her incarnation as a Greek mountain nymph but fell afoul of Zeus. (Various versions of her myth exist, but in most she raised objections to his marriage to Hera.) In retaliation and as a warning to others, Zeus caused her home to collapse on her. Now she carries her home with her wherever she goes. Chelone was transformed into a turtle, a mute creature, and thus forever silenced.

Chelone is the matron goddess of those who have been silenced, including political prisoners and those who are persecuted or imprisoned lest they speak.

She is the guardian of the homeless and those capable of carrying all their possessions on their backs.

Although she may be invoked at any time, as it’s World Turtle Day, it’s effectively her feast day. Request her blessings. Chelone’s color is green. Her plants are turtlehead flowers (*Chelone spp.*). Decorate her altar with images of

turtles or even maintain a happy habitat for turtles. Donations on behalf of turtles are the appropriate offering.

FLORA

Flora is an ancient goddess, believed to be originally of Oscan or Sabine origin—among the people conquered and absorbed by the Romans in their conquest of what is now modern Italy. Flora is the spirit of springtime and flowers. Traditionally envisioned as a beautiful woman crowned and adorned with flowers, Flora is very much a goddess of this month with numerous celebrations in her honor. Although she is the goddess of *all* flowers, fragile, transient bean blossoms are considered most sacred to her. Like those bean blossoms, Flora is a goddess of the pleasure and beauty of fleeting moments, thus of romance, rather than marriage. However, flowers are also harbingers of forthcoming fruitfulness. Flora is a goddess of reproductive promise. Seek her assistance if conception—being fruitful—is desired or a challenge. Lastly, beans are associated with death in Roman tradition, as in so many others. May, the month in which Flora shines brightest, also features numerous opportunities to commune with the dead, pay homage to your ancestors, and take precautionary action against negative hauntings from unhappy ghosts.

Today is an excellent day to celebrate Flora and request her aid. It's also an excellent day to plant flowers and to decorate the graves of your loved ones. Flora's altar may be maintained indoors or outdoors. Offer her spring water and decorate with flowers.

May 24

The Rosalia

Today's Rosalia is not the same festival as that celebrated yesterday, although the way one celebrates is similar. *This* Rosalia is a three-day festival beginning today, the anniversary of the one that used to be celebrated in Pergamon, a great city of Anatolia, now in modern Turkey. These are days of wine and roses. Scholars believe this festival was inherited or influenced by the Romans, but similar celebrations of roses occur wherever these powerful plants are harvested.

Unlike yesterday, the focus is not specifically on the goddess Flora (although if you are a devotee, you can certainly keep celebrating her). Rather, it is on

roses themselves—the flowers and the spirit of the rose. Like yesterday, the beauty of roses may be shared with the beloved dead. Bring roses to the graves of loved ones, as well as picnic lunches, so that you can celebrate with those who have passed beyond the veil. Those who wish to work with plant spirit familiars will find today very conducive to working with the Spirit of the Rose.

Rose Water

Rose water is a component of many spells, especially for spiritual cleansing, protection, and romance.

Add rose water to a spray bottle so that you may spray yourself after any other cleansing ritual.

Wash your hands with rose water before casting love or sweetening spells to enhance their power.

Rose water may be purchased, although not all products labeled “rose water” contain genuine ingredients, and some may be laden with pesticides. Look for edible products, such as those used for Middle Eastern or North African cooking, or for hydrosols sold by reputable aromatherapy suppliers, which may even be able to identify the source and color of the roses.

But rose water is easy to make for yourself. Just be sure to avoid pesticides on your flowers, especially if you intend to consume the water or apply it to your body. (This formula may also be used to concoct other types of fragrant flower waters, such as jasmine or orange blossom.)

1. Carefully remove the petals from several roses and place them in a small pot.
2. Cover them with spring water and place over medium heat.
3. Allow to simmer gently.
4. Do not walk away from the stove but keep watch, as you will soon observe a visual change in the petals. They will become limp and the color may fade slightly. It's not always the same, but if you're watching, you'll see it. If in doubt, let the pot simmer a minute longer.
5. Strain and allow the liquid to cool before bottling or using it. If not used right away, it's best to refrigerate the rose water.



May 25

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

International Missing Children's Day

This annual commemoration is intended to raise awareness of the plight of missing children. Numerous ways to assist exist, as do sources that will advise how to help in legal and social ways. Children's vulnerability is an age-old scenario, and spiritual entities to whom one may appeal also exist. The list that follows is but a sampling, and clearly their aid may be requested as needed, not only today. However, even if this is not your own personal tragedy, one can request that the following safely locate and return lost and missing children.

Adeona is the Italian spirit of safe returns, who often works in conjunction with her sister Abeona, the spirit of safe departures. Although she protects all travelers, Adeona is especially associated with children and young people. If a child has been forcibly removed from home, invoke Adeona's aid. If you wish to create an altar for this now obscure goddess, incorporate the imagery of gates, portals, and the road home.

Saint Anthony of Padua, the "finding saint": there is little Anthony cannot do, but remember to put your requests to him in the form of "finding." Ask Anthony to locate or find whatever is needed or lost, ranging from the comparatively trivial—your keys or purse—to the crucial, such as missing people. A little rhyme will help you ask. This is the version I was taught, but other variants exist, as well: "*Tony, Tony, look around! Someone's lost and must be found.*" Repeat the rhyme and then give Tony the specifics. See his entry on [June 13](#) for more information.

Demeter is the Greek goddess whose defining myth retells her search for her

own kidnapped daughter, Persephone. Her search was difficult; very few helped, the goddess Hekate being a noted exception. Some of those who tried to help were silenced by the perpetrators. That last word is intentionally plural; although Hades is blamed for stealing Persephone, he had been given permission by her father, Zeus. This is also a story of patriarchal assertion of rights over mothers and children. If this resonates with you, Demeter is likely your goddess. She is a great magician and there is little she cannot do. Decorate her altar with baskets of wheat and other grains, as well as poppies and pomegranates. She accepts wreaths and dollies made from wheat, but Demeter rejects wine or alcoholic beverages. Instead give her mint-flavored barley water.

World Tarot Day

Celebrated since 2003, World Tarot Day is a celebration of all things tarot, as well as an opportunity to dispel misinformation about it. Tarot, a seventy-eight-card deck, consists of two parts: the Major Arcana, twenty-two named cards, such as The Magician, The Moon, or Death; and the Minor Arcana, fifty-six cards, split into four suits that roughly correspond to playing cards. It is currently among the most popular forms of divination, but tarot is also a game, an art form, and a tool for meditation and therapy. Today is a great time to buy or explore a new deck or expand your tarot studies. An excellent spiritual exercise is to shuffle a tarot deck well and then select a single card that will represent you and your personal situation and needs until next May 25. Make sure you use a deck that resonates with you and whose images you love. Accompany this exercise with rituals, as desired. I've suggested next May 25, but this exercise may be repeated as you deem best. You can draw a card weekly, monthly, or on dates that are meaningful to you, too. Once you've drawn a card, spend some time contemplating its meanings and implications. Tarot is a helpful tool, and all cards—including the scary-looking ones—will help us live our best lives.

Spirit of the Day

FORTUNA

Today is a feast day of Italian goddess Fortuna, the original Lady Luck. The wheel of fortune, immortalized on tarot cards, is among her symbols. For further details about this benevolent goddess, please see the entry for [April 1](#).

May 26

Vampire Protection Spell

Today is World Dracula day, the date chosen to coincide with the day Bram Stoker's influential novel was first published. Celebrate by reading *Dracula* or watching films inspired by it. However, if vampires frighten you, protective measures against vampires have existed far longer than Dracula. General folklore suggests that vampires, as well as some kinds of demons, are obsessive-compulsives. A simple way to foil them and protect yourself is to hang netting, especially fishing nets, over your bed, doorways, and anywhere you'd like to create a protective shield. It's believed that vampires will have to stop and count every hole and knot, leaving you time to escape or take stronger measures.

May 27

Lenormand Spell in a Bag

Lenormand cards and related decks such as Kipper cards have long been popular in Europe but were little known in North America before the twenty-first century, when they captured the attention of the cartomancy community. Although these cards are named in honor of cartomancer Marie-Anne Lenormand, whose birthday is today, Lenormand cards as we know them were created and standardized after her death. Although Mme. Lenormand did read cards, there is no indication that she ever used a similar deck. Naming the cards for her was likely a marketing ploy, an attempt to connect with her reputation as a skilled, successful psychic practitioner.

A standard Lenormand deck consists of thirty-six cards. As with Tarot, the cards are arranged in numerical order. Lenormand Card 1 is *The Rider*, for example, while Card 3 is *The Ship*, and so forth up until Card 36, *The Cross*. Lenormand cards are typically small in size and thus perfect for spellwork. The imagery tends to be unambiguous, also an asset.

Familiarize yourself with a deck. A huge variety exists now—find one with artwork that resonates with you.

When in need, choose a card that best expresses your need or the goal of your spell. For example, the dog card (#10) represents loyalty and fidelity. If

your desire is for this quality to be manifested by a specific person, then select a card to represent them, the man or woman card, for example, but any card could be used as long as it best personifies your desire.

Slip one or more cards, as needed, into a drawstring charm bag. Add a drop of Crown of Success Oil (see [January 12](#) for the formula), and a small lodestone to draw your desire to you. Carry this as a charm bag or slip it beneath your pillow or mattress.

In the spirit of the month, if you're afraid that the recently deceased will rise from their grave to disturb the living, plant thorny rose bushes over their grave as soon as possible following burial.

May 28

Saint of the Day

BERNARD OF MENTHON

There are two famous Saint Bernards: one is associated with the Knights Templar. This is the other one. Bernard (c. 925–May 28, 1008), born a Savoy nobleman, ran off to join the Benedictine Brotherhood, a monastic order. He spent the rest of his life in remote corners of the Alps, then a refuge for Pagans resisting conversion, as well as for less conventional Christians, who also sought safety amid the often-impenetrable snow-covered mountains.

Bernard vowed to make the roads passable and safe for pilgrims and travelers. He founded safe, clean hostels and established patrols to eliminate brigands that preyed on travelers. Saint Bernard dogs, trained to locate those lost in the snow, are named in his honor. He is the patron saint of the breed, as well as those who breed them, care for them, train them, benefit from them, or rescue them.

Bernard is also the patron saint of those who love and travel in the Alps, as well as skiers everywhere. Bernard protects runaways and may be requested to help extricate you from unwanted relationships or situations. To request his

assistance, light a white candle for him and give him a shot of Benedictine liqueur or Benedictine and Brandy (B&B).

May 29

The Ambarvalia

This Roman festival is dedicated to various agricultural deities including Ceres, Mars, and Bacchus (Dionysus). In addition to honoring them, the Ambarvalia is celebrated with rites of purification and rituals to reinforce and protect boundaries. No work is done by humans or animals today and no ill words are to be said. Back in the day, this was a very ritualized state-sponsored festival led by the priesthood and featuring sacrifices. Those who feel devotion to any of today's deities should feel free to pay homage in ways appropriate to a twenty-first-century practitioner. (See [January 24](#) for more information about Ceres.)

Saint of the Day

BONA OF PISA

Following visionary experiences that began during her childhood, Bona (c. 1156–May 29, 1207) dedicated her life to guiding travelers on the pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela, the shrine of Saint James in Spain that is still among Earth's great pilgrimage routes. She developed a reputation as a holy woman, and people sought her blessing and healing touch, as they continue to do now centuries after her death.

She is invoked for healing, especially of headaches and migraines. Bona is the matron saint of travelers, especially couriers, flight attendants, tour guides, pilgrims, and those on spiritual journeys. If you wish to travel the road to Compostela but need help with any aspect, such as raising funds or being healthy enough, request her aid. Decorate her altar and candles with scallop shells, the emblem of Santiago de Compostela.

A Traveler's Amulet

A Saint Bona medal or holy card can serve as a traveler's amulet intended to provide safety on the road in the manner of Saint Christopher medals. However, many types of traveler's amulets exist, such as this one that you can construct for

yourself.

1. Create a long, narrow charm bag by sewing up three sides of a piece of red flannel, so that it approximates the size of a finger.
2. Stuff it with a combination of any, some, or all of the following: dirt from a crossroads, dirt from your home (if it's happy and you are safe there), kohl powder, or charcoal.
3. Add a pinch of the dried herb feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) and either a small silver bead or a moonstone or tiger's eye chip.
4. Sew up the open side, so your flannel packet is now completely closed. As you sew, focus on prayers or affirmations of safety and happiness.



May 30

Saint of the Day

JOAN OF ARC

Joan of Arc may be the most famous saint in the world, familiar even to those who know nothing of saints and care even less. Today marks the anniversary of her death in 1431, and is a double feast for Joan, serving all her fans and devotees, regardless of spiritual or religious orientation, as it is both her officially recognized spiritual feast and a secular holiday in France, celebrating Joan as a national heroine. Here is a brief history of her life.

Joan was born to a peasant family in Domrémy, a village in Lorraine, France, during the 100 Years War (1337–1453), a conflict between England and France. Her birthday is unknown and likely never recorded. Many sources cite January 6 as her birthday, but this date was assigned long after her death, chosen for symbolic reasons, as it's the Feast of the Epiphany. Shortly before her death, Joan identified herself as being “nineteen or thereabouts,” and so her birth is

estimated to have occurred in 1411 or 1412.

Illiterate and lacking military or other training, the only religious education she received was from her mother. At around age thirteen, Joan began having incredible mystical experiences, receiving visitations and auditory messages from Archangel Michael and Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch. She had a visionary experience of Archangel Gabriel surrounded by a host of angels. The messages advised her that it was her destiny to save France by helping its true king regain his throne. Joan resisted these messages for three years, but finally acquiesced.

Despite the unlikeliness of her success, Joan accomplished this goal, developing a mixed reputation on the way. Her sheer uniqueness, combined with feats of prophesy and the apparent ability to heal via the power of her hands, led some to acclaim her as a holy woman, while others branded her a witch. Joan was captured by Burgundian forces who sold her to the English. She was put on trial at Rouen, Normandy, then under English rule, by an English-backed Church court. Joan ably defended herself before a council of highly educated theologians. It is among the best-documented trials of the era. Ultimately, she was convicted and burned at the stake in Rouen on May 30, 1431.

Joan is the only person condemned by a church court to be later acclaimed as a saint by that same church. That said, Joan has not been an official saint for very long: her canonization only occurred in 1920, as part of a post–World War I attempt at closer relations between the Vatican and France. For almost five centuries, Joan was the most famous unofficial saint.

Joan is invoked by all who love and admire her, but she is officially the matron saint of rape victims, political prisoners, those falsely accused, and soldiers. Unofficially, she is the matron saint of clairaudients. Because of her auditory experiences, she is the saint of radio and those whose work has anything to do with radio, from disc jockeys to engineers. By extension, she is a guardian against hostile EVP (electronic voice phenomena). If you feel threatened by any kind of EVP, whether deriving from radios or not, request Joan's aid and place her image near the source of your fear, ideally one in which she holds her sword.

As in life, so in death: Joan is invoked for healing. She is also invoked for strength in the face of adversity and for courage of your own convictions. She is primarily requested for protection and success, despite all odds.

A candle spell invokes Joan's protection for the members of your household.

Joan of Arc Protection Spell

The colors most associated with Joan are gray and silver, perhaps in emulation of

her armor. Candles in these colors are ideal, although white candles may also be used.

1. You will need one small candle for each member of your household—use a votive-sized candle or a chime candle. Feel free to include nonhuman members of your household, such as animals, birds, or fish. Each will require its own candle.
2. Scratch the name of each individual, along with date of birth, if known, into the wax of the candle that represents them.
3. Place these candles before an image of Joan of Arc. (If you don't own one, just look online—you'll find a plethora. Choose the one you like and make a copy. Promise that, should she fulfill your request, you'll obtain an image to maintain.)
4. Light the candles and tell Joan what you need.
5. Some are uncomfortable invoking Joan in candle spells, as she died so horribly from fire. If so, add an image of Archangel Michael to the tableau. Michael is not only the angel of fire safety; he was also among Joan's primary guides. His presence will comfort and empower her.
6. It is recommended that this spell be repeated nine times, either nine days in a row or on nine consecutive Tuesdays.



May 31

The Golden Money Spider Spell

*If you wish to live and thrive,
Let the spider stay alive.*

Although many are terrified of spiders, in mythology, folklore, and magic, spiders are considered lucky creatures, bringing protection, fertility, and

prosperity. No need for contact with a living spider. An image is sufficient to reap these benefits, as in the following spell, which draws upon the powers of the mythical golden money spider. Although this spell may be cast at any time, today, the anniversary of the death of artist Louise Bourgeois, is a perfect moment. Bourgeois, who died in 2010, was known for her huge installation pieces. Her mother was a weaver, and Bourgeois is renowned for her giant spider sculptures including *Maman* (“Mother”), which stands over thirty feet tall.

1. Create an image of a small golden spider on red paper—use metallic gold ink or paint or even a gold-colored ink pad and a spider rubber stamp.
2. Place the picture in a corner of your home atop a flat surface. (If you’re familiar with feng shui, place it in the location of the wealth corner).
3. Place some coins in a dish situated under or beside the picture. Make an invocation to the spider, letting it know what you seek.
4. Periodically add some coins to the dish, especially if the spider comes through for you.
5. When the dish is full, place most of the coins in a small jar with a lid, leaving a few coins for the spider. Bury the jar of coins in your backyard or within a potted plant. Alternatively, donate the amount to charity. Continue adding coins and repeat whenever the dish is full.



June

June, the sixth month of the year, is dedicated to Italian goddess Juno. Preceding the Romans in the region, earliest surviving documentation indicates she may have been Etruscan. Juno is Rome's number one goddess—her name derives from the same etymological roots as the word “one,” more obvious in the Etruscan variant of her name: Uni, as in *uno*, unicorn, or unicycle. Juno's importance cannot be overemphasized. Worshipped as part of the Capitoline Triad alongside Jupiter and Minerva, Juno also has various paths or manifestations, such as Juno Lupa, Juno Moneta, Juno Februata, or Juno Caprotina. These may always have been facets of a complex goddess, or Juno may have absorbed the identities of other, now obscure, local goddesses.

In her earliest incarnations, Juno is a goddess of time with dominion over its orderly organization, especially the menstrual cycle. In her guise as Juno Covella (“Juno of the Vault of the Heavens”), she is the goddess of the earliest lunar calendar. The first day of each month is dedicated to Juno, whether this is by calendar date or by sighting of the new moon. Although Juno is not typically considered a “lunar goddess” in the same manner as Artemis, Luna, or Hekate, she is associated with the moon, especially in its role as orderly timekeeper and its affiliation with women. Juno is a great healer, especially of menstrual and reproductive disorders.

Juno is a goddess of women and the cycles of their lives:

- Women honored Juno on their birthdays.
- Marriage is Juno's sacrament: to marry in June is to receive her blessings on your union.
- An offering table honoring Juno was maintained for a week near a newborn's bed.
- Traditional offerings for Juno include irises, roses, figs, and peacock feathers. Her sacred creatures include crows, geese, goats, peacocks, and wolves.

Angel of June: Muriel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Gemini and Cancer

Bird of the Month: dove

Birthstones of the Month: agate, alexandrite, moonstone, pearl

Flowers of the Month: honeysuckle, rose

Insect of the Month: June bug or June beetle, a folk name for various scarab beetles that emerge around this time of year in North America (sub family *Melolonthinae*)

June's Holidays and Extra Power Days

Feast of Saint Onofrio: June 12

Feasts of Saint Anthony, Agoussou, and Papa Legba: June 13

Feast of Marie Laveau: June 15

Midsummers Eve, Saint John's Eve: June 23

Midsummers Day, Saint John's Day: June 24

Eve of Peter, Paul, and Vitus: June 28

Moveable Feasts

The summer solstice occurs in June, coinciding with the sun's entry into the constellation Cancer and the Wiccan sabbat Litha. Some prefer to celebrate Midsummer Day in conjunction with the summer solstice.

Midya: a celebration of self, founded by author Clifford Brooks, occurs on the final Wednesday in June. Midya is a day to focus on what is most significant to *you*. For more details on the holiday and its candle ritual, please see "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#)."



June 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Spirits of the Day

CARNA AND CARDEA

Carna is the Italian goddess of carnality. She is the goddess of the flesh, who rules the corporeal body and its functioning, especially the digestive system and the ability to experience carnal pleasures. If either of these are compromised for you, today, her feast day, is an excellent time to seek Carna’s blessings of healing. She is associated with the entire body, but especially the internal organs. Carna may be requested for assistance with eating disorders and auto-immune disorders. Inability to derive pleasure from food is also under her domain.

Carna’s feast is also known as the Feast of the Bean Calends: it’s traditional to consume beans and bacon in her honor.

According to myth, Janus, the gatekeeper god (see the introductory pages for [January](#) for details), fell madly in love with Carna and transformed her into Cardea to keep her ever near. The Latin word *cardo* means a “hinge” or “pivot.” Cardea Goddess of Hinges controls the opening and shutting of all doors, literally, metaphorically, and spiritually, similar to other gate guardian spirits such as her lover Janus, or Papa Legba, Saint Peter, and Hekate. Request Cardea’s assistance to open doors of opportunity for you. (Be specific.) Those who fear the presence of others into their living spaces can ask Cardea for protection. Cardea is invoked to protect babies and children from the Evil Eye and malevolent forces.

Janus and Cardea may be venerated together. Carna and Cardea may be understood as two faces of a complex goddess or as two distinct incarnations, whichever resonates best with you or suits your own personal spiritual needs.

JUNO MONETA

On this day in 344 BCE, a temple dedicated to Juno Moneta was dedicated in Rome at the site where the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Altar of Heaven (*Santa Maria in Aracoeli*) now stands, the highest summit of the Capitoline Hill. Juno Moneta is Juno in her guise as She Who Warns of Danger, recalling the event in 390 BCE, when the honking of Juno’s sacred geese alerted Romans to what would

otherwise have been a surprise attack by the Gauls. Juno, credited with saving the city, was hailed as the vigilant guardian of Rome. As a result, Rome's mint was installed next to her temple, deemed the safest place, thus her epithet "Moneta" became the root of words like money, monetary, and mint, although it actually derives from *monere* or "to warn." Ask Juno to protect your finances today, as well as to warn you of any incoming danger or surprise attacks, financial or otherwise.

June 2

Count Cagliostro's Child Oracle

For millennia, children have been considered excellent mediums and oracles (sometimes leading to exploitation and abuse). This may be because children are perceived as more in touch with innate human magical powers or because their innocence is perceived as offering honesty. In effect, they won't comprehend the impact of what they say, thus they will be less guarded and more honest than adult seers.

Today is the birthday of magical scholar and occultist Count Cagliostro, and this is his version of more ancient spells. When working with children, it's crucial that children's psychic gifts not be suppressed, nor should the rituals be abusive.

1. Although the child will deliver the oracle, the supervising adult performs all preparatory work, such as spiritually cleansing the room, casting protection spells, and organizing the ritual space. The adult is responsible for *everything*, especially fire safety. The child must never be left alone or unattended with lit candles.
2. Place a pan of water on a low table surrounded by lit white candles. The atmosphere should be neutral, not scary, so as not to intimidate or frighten a child, nor so much fun that the child's imagination is stimulated.
3. Ask the child to sit before the pan of water and gaze within. Don't ask leading questions. Simply ask whether the child sees anything.
4. Record whatever the child sees. The child is not expected to interpret anything, merely to report what he or she sees. Whatever they say is the

oracular response, even if it does not initially seem to be.

5. If the child sees nothing, take a brief break, then try again. You may try up to three times. If no answer is forthcoming, this in itself is the response.

June 3

Spirit of the Day

HERCULES

Not just a hero, Hercules is also a deity whose veneration took different forms in different regions. In his Greek homeland, Heracles—the Greek spelling—was a deity of healing and prosperity, presiding over hydrotherapy, thermal spas, and hot springs and venerated by all genders.

In Rome, where he is called Hercules, he evolved into a man's deity, the male counterpart of the women's goddesses known as Bona Dea. (See [May 1](#) for details.) Roman Hercules is venerated exclusively by men. Today marks the Roman feast of Hercules Custos (Hercules the Guardian), who provides protection, good fortune, and prosperity. His blessings include good health, stamina, and vigor, sexual and otherwise. Roman tradition suggests that Hercules—their version of him—accepts any food or drink offering, but only if given by men. He likes offerings to be shared, thus it's traditional to sponsor a feast given in his honor and celebrated as a party.

Images of Hercules served as the prototype for those of Saint Christopher, and some believe that he lurks beneath the mask of the saint. Fans of Saint Christopher may find today a beneficial day for appeals and candles as well. (Also see [June 30](#) for another feast day for Hercules.)

June 4

Saints of the Day

MARY OF BETHANY

Mary of Bethany is the Mary who, according to the New Testament, sat at the feet of Jesus while her sister Martha did all the housework. However, there are

an awful lot of Marys in the New Testament: Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Mary Jacobe, and Mary Salomé. Originally, these were all understood to be distinct, individual women, and the Eastern Orthodox Church still considers them so. However, Gregory I, pope between 590 and 604, declared that Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed woman in *Luke 7:37–50* “who was a sinner” were all one and the same. Whether this was done to relieve the confusion of so many Marys or to *create* confusion and obfuscate the individual identities of these women—and their importance—remains subject to debate. Today is the feast of Mary of Bethany. Those who understand her as identical to the Magdalene may venerate her in that guise today. (Mary Magdalene’s own official feast is celebrated on July 22.)

According to *Luke 10:38–42*, Mary of Bethany lived in a household with her sister Martha and brother Lazarus, frequently visited by family friend Jesus. The behavior of the sisters is contrasted: Martha, whose feast is on July 29, is busy making sure that the household runs smoothly. She may be seen to exemplify the Yiddish term *balabusta* (deriving from the Hebrew *ba’alat habayit* or *Mistress of the House*). Meanwhile, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus, listening and learning.

Martha, aggravated that Mary isn’t helping, complains to Jesus, who admonishes her, advising that Mary may have made the better choice. Beyond the spiritual implications, this Bible verse has also been interpreted as indicating the relationship between Jesus and the sisters. In first-century Judea, what woman would complain about housework to a man, let alone one who is a prominent teacher of royal ancestry? The response is: a close family member—a mother, sister, or wife. Some interpret this passage as proof that Martha was married to Jesus, an interpretation further bolstered by their titles. In this passage, Jesus is referred to as “the Master.” “Martha” derives from an Aramaic word meaning “Mistress.”

Mary of Bethany is a shadowy saint, eclipsed by the more famous Martha and Mary Magdalene. She is often counted among the Marys of the Sea, that conglomerate of saints named Mary. Today is a good time for delving into spiritual and historical mysteries including your own genealogy. She may also be invoked by those whose decision to devote themselves to spirituality or learning is criticized by friends and family. Light a candle or some myrrh incense for her.

June 5

World Environment Day

Held annually on the fifth of June, the focus of World Environment Day is on healing and protecting Earth's natural environment. There may be local issues that are especially relevant for you, and it is a good day for any kind of actual cleanup, as well as lobbying and education. Those of a spiritual bent may direct petitions, prayers, and rituals to those spirits who guard various aspects of the environment, for example Ceres, Demeter, Gaia, Herta, Kybele, Mae Thoranee, the Nagas, and Tellus Mater. For sea spirits, please see [June 8](#) (World Oceans Day).

June 6

D-Day

On this day in 1944, American, British, and Canadian forces landed on a heavily fortified stretch of beach in Normandy in Nazi-occupied France. Code-named Operation Neptune, but commonly referred to as D-Day, it was the largest seaborne invasion in history, paving the way for the Allied victory over fascism. Over 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded, or vanished never to be heard from again during the Battle of Normandy.

Spirits of the Day

ARTEMIS

The sixth day of each month is sacred to Greek goddess Artemis (whether calculated by lunar or calendar date), and so the sixth day of the sixth month is an extravaganza. Artemis, the Lady of the Wild Mountains, is a goddess of the moon, women, lesbians, fertility, and wild nature. She is a goddess of hunting who protects the balance between predators' need to eat and prey animals' need to survive. She grants fertility to those unable to conceive but is also held responsible for the deaths of women in childbirth. She may be invoked for a swift, merciful death, as well as for prosperity, good health, and longevity. Her sacred creatures include bear, dogs, wolves, deer, bees, and boar, but Artemis is the Lady of the Beasts and the guardian of all creatures.

She is also a sponsor of athletes, especially female athletes, especially

archers, runners, and swimmers, as well as trance dancers. Artemis is traditionally envisioned as a young, graceful archer, accompanied by dogs and deer; however, she is a magician who can shapeshift into virtually any form. She sometimes manifests as a mermaid and is associated with mountain springs and lakes. Offer Artemis honey cakes, round as the moon, pure spring water, and donations and good deeds on behalf of wild nature and wild birds, bees, fish, and animals. Her colors are white and silver, like the moon, and her number is 6.

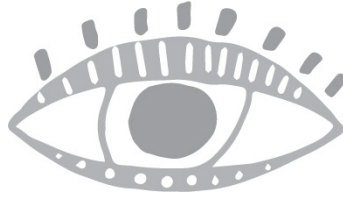
Artemis Protection Charm Bag

The *Artemisia* family of plants is named in her honor, reputedly a healing gift from the goddess. These plants, including mugwort, wormwood, tarragon, and southernwood, are used in traditional medicine as menstrual regulators. Today is a good day to construct a charm bag invoking the protection and blessings of Artemis. (Avoid contact with these plants if you are pregnant or wish to conceive, as they can cause uterine contractions.)

1. Place dried mugwort, tarragon, and southernwood leaves in a white fabric charm bag. Include a small piece of wormwood, either a twig or a piece of the root. You may also incorporate the herb Dittany of Crete. You may use a drawstring bag or sew up a packet so that the herbs are entirely contained. If using a drawstring, invoke Artemis' blessings as you tie knots. If sewing up a bag, invoke her blessing with each stitch.
2. Decorate your bag with small silver charms in the shapes of the moon, arrows, night birds like owls, or animals, especially those most associated with Artemis. As you sew or otherwise attach the charms, invoke Artemis' blessings.
3. Consecrate this bag by leaving it overnight on an altar dedicated to Artemis, whether inside or outside. This may be done at any time, but tonight is ideal.

OCHOSSI

African Diaspora spirits (orishas, lwa, or others) may be syncretized to multiple saints, potentially sharing all their feasts. For example, Ochossi, spirit of hunting and justice, is syncretized to Saint Sebastian and shares his feast of January 20. However, Ochossi is also syncretized to the lesser-known Saint Norbert, who died on this day in 1134. Today is Norbert's feast and thus also a feast of Ochossi. Please see the entry on [January 20](#) for more information about Ochossi.



June 7

The Vestalia

The Vestalia, beginning today and continuing through June 15, is an eight-day festival honoring the goddess Vesta. Please see [below](#) for more information about Vesta. Devotees of Vesta may honor the goddess, but the next eight days are also ideal for cleansing, consecrating, or reconsecrating your altars, hearth, and home, especially your spiritual and magical space.

Spirit of the Day

VESTA

Vesta, Guardian of the Hearth, Lady of the Flame, was Rome's preeminent goddess included in virtually every sacrifice. Vesta is the last to be invoked in every Roman ritual, just as Janus is first. She may have been the Romans' first goddess, possibly their original tribal goddess, and part of their pantheon of deities before Juno. Vesta's temple in the Roman Forum was the epicenter of Roman state religion, its small round shape markedly different from other Roman sacred architecture, intended to recall the round huts of the earliest Romans. Vesta was so significant that her sacred traditions could not be changed, even after they had fallen from fashion elsewhere: Vesta was the last and eventually only Roman deity served by an exclusively female priesthood, the Vestal Virgins.

Vesta's name derives from etymological roots meaning "to burn," and the Vestal Virgins were the guardians of Rome's sacred flame. (If the fire went out, the Vestals were scourged. If it had to be relit, it was done the old-fashioned way by rubbing two sticks together.) The flame was finally extinguished in 394 CE when Roman Emperor Theodosius banned all Pagan rituals and religion.

Vesta is the guardian goddess of hearth, stove, and threshold, venerated

wherever there is a flame. Although she is everyone's goddess, her special constituency includes millers and bakers. A mysterious goddess, Vesta is rarely portrayed, and when she is, she is usually veiled. Vesta is present in every fire, which is also a portal to access her.

Offerings to Vesta are not placed to rest on an altar but deposited directly into fire. (Typically grains; do not offer alcohol, water, or other liquids. Vesta is a fire goddess.) Vesta is an oracular goddess, whose wisdom may be accessed through pyromancy. Please see [February 1](#) for details and instructions. Alternatively, donkeys are Vesta's sacred creatures, and offerings on their behalf may also be welcome.

June 8

World Oceans Day

Since 2002, people around the world gather on World Oceans Day to honor, celebrate, and try to protect the sea. Formal events are organized through aquariums and numerous foundations. More information, including opportunities to participate in events, may be found online at <https://www.worldoceansday.org/>.

Those who wish to incorporate magical or spiritual themes into their celebrations may consider appeals to spirits of the sea. Here are some examples, but there are many: Lord Agwé, Amphitrite, Maguayan, Mananan, Poseidon, Thalassa, and Yemaya. Today is an excellent day to go mermaiding, visit the ocean, or engage in cleanup operations there. (Organized opportunities exist, but you can also do this on your own by picking up trash and disposing of it appropriately.)

Spirits of the Day

MERMAIDS

Virtually every culture on Earth possesses some sort of mermaid lore, and mermaids remain incredibly popular today. Although mermaids and mermaid deities may be venerated anytime, World Oceans Day is an excellent time to celebrate them. For more information about mermaids and instructions for creating a mermaid wand, please see [March 29](#).



June 9

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BLESSED ANNA MARIA TAIGI

Today, the anniversary of her death in 1837, is the feast of unofficial saint Anna Maria Taigi, known as the Tuscan Seeress. During her lifetime, this visionary mystic was controversial and often identified as an occultist. She was written up in the July 1928 issue of the British journal *The Occult Review*, which described her as a clairvoyant and an oracle never known to fail. In 1790, following the birth of her first child, Anna Maria had a vision of a glowing ball of light. From then on, she saw it constantly, although it was only visible to her. The ball served as a sort of private, sacred crystal ball—Taigi had but to gaze at it and present and future events worldwide were revealed to her, as were the hidden secrets of people's souls. She interpreted the light as representing eternal wisdom. Taigi became a renowned seer and healer. With the aid of her luminous globe, she was able to perform effective distance healings and predict deaths. Four days prior to the death of Pope Pius VII, Taigi advised him to receive last rites.

Anna Maria Taigi is consistently portrayed with her ball of light. As it resembles a crystal ball, she is, unofficially at least, the matron saint of crystal gazers, as well as of victims of spousal and parental abuse of all kinds, plus mothers, caregivers, and homemakers. To request her assistance, offer her candles. If she comes through for you, donate a psychic reading to the needy or visit her shrine in Rome's Basilica of San Crisogono in Trastevere. Donations on behalf of battered or abused women are also appropriate.

EZILI FREDA DAHOMEY

Beautiful Ezili Freda Dahomey is among the preeminent spirits of Haitian Vodou, a spirit of love, luxury, beauty, and romance: life as it should be lived in all best-case scenarios. Yet she is, at the same time, the spirit of heartbreak, bitter

disappointment, and undying hope. In Ezili's dreamy vision, everyone behaves politely, kindly, and graciously in a world without racism, sexism, and poverty. Inevitably, reality intrudes. Unfortunately, life, lovers, and circumstances are too often disappointing, and so Ezili, an ancient water spirit, weeps rivers of tears, enough to flood the universe.

Ezili Freda Dahomey is envisioned as an elegant and expensive courtesan. She does love her luxuries, preferring the finest French champagne, perfume, and pastry as offerings. Beware, however. Don't be fooled by illusions: Ezili is *not* a courtesan. She only plays one. Instead, she is a great goddess, who originated, as her name indicates, in the Kingdom of Dahomey, now Benin in West Africa, and traveled with the slave trade to the Caribbean.

"Ezili" names specific spirits but also a family of them who may be understood as sisters or as different aspects of the same being. Ezili Freda and her rival, Ezili Dantor, are the most famous, but there are others such as the beautiful mermaid La Sirène, known as Ezili of the Sea. When people discuss Ezili, however, as if she is only one spirit, they almost inevitably mean Ezili Freda Dahomey. Originally a water snake spirit—beautiful woman from the waist up, water snake down below—who carried a bejeweled dagger, when enslaved devotees saw images of the Mater Dolorosa (the Madonna whose heart is pierced with swords), they recognized the essence of Ezili Freda Dahomey. That image is the one most frequently used to identify her, but she is also associated with other aspects of Mary.

Today is the Marian feast of Mary, Mother of Grace, and so it is simultaneously a feast of Ezili Freda, specifically in her guise as Maitresse Mambo—the divine Vodou priestess. With Ezili Freda, quality is better than quantity, although she likes quantity, too, but only if it's the best. If you love her, ask her to help you achieve the wealth needed to keep her in the style she craves and deserves. Her symbols are a boat, a mirror, and a heart pierced with a sword. Her bird is the flamingo, and her creature a snake. She traditionally prefers Cacharel's *Anaïs Anaïs* perfume. Her plants include fig and laurel trees, as well as basil.

Ezili Freda Prosperity Wash

This spell invoking wealth and financial security originates in rituals devoted to Ezili Freda. Basil is magically connected to prosperity; tulsi, another species of basil, is sacred to Laksmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth. That said, if the spell is cast today, it may be beneficial to add an appeal to Ezili, requesting that she help you achieve your dreams. If she does, then be sure to present her with appropriate gifts—at minimum, some fine and expensive French champagne

served in an elegant glass.

1. Shred the leaves of a good handful of fresh, beautiful basil leaves and place them in a bowl.
2. Cover this with boiling spring water.
3. Cover the container and save for three days. (You can refrigerate this if you like, but it's not necessary, as it will not be consumed.)
4. On the fourth day, strain out the basil leaves, saving the liquid.
5. Sprinkle the liquid over the thresholds and counters of your home and business, as well as any place perceived as vulnerable, such as cash registers or windowsills. This allegedly promotes prosperity, protects your valuables, and attracts business.

June 10

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Bridget Bishop

Today is the anniversary of the death of Bridget Bishop, executed by hanging in 1692. Bridget was not the first to be accused of practicing witchcraft in Salem, nor was she the first arrested, but she was the first to be convicted and killed. During her two-day trial, she vociferously insisted on her innocence and denied all charges.

Several people including the young girls at the heart of the Salem witch panic testified against Bridget. Her ghost reputedly still haunts Salem. You'll know she's near by the inexplicable and sudden scent of apples. Bridget has long fascinated witches and researchers alike. Although it's generally accepted that most of the victims of the Salem witch panic were not "witches," Bridget is sometimes considered the exception. At the very least, many believe she had a good working knowledge of English folk magic.

Poppets made from rags and pierced with hog bristles were allegedly found within the walls of a home she owned. Although they were not produced at

court, nor is there proof that these little dolls existed, or even that Bridget made them, they were treated as incontrovertible proof that Bridget was a witch. In the twenty-first century, Bridget has become increasingly associated with poppet magic, almost as if she were a presiding spirit of the craft.

POPPET MAGIC

Poppets are small dolls, typically made from fabric, something like a stuffed rag doll. (Poppets are also made from other materials like corn husks or wax, but these may require more skill to craft.) The word derives from the same etymological roots as “puppet” or *poupée*, French for “doll.” The simplest are magical packets decorated to resemble someone, while the most sophisticated are works of magical art. Only the most minimal sewing skills are required to make the simplest. Each doll is intended to represent someone. If working on multiple people, each requires their own poppet. Poppets serve all sorts of magical purposes and are as easily crafted for blessing and healing as for cursing.

They are personalized to provide a magical link to the spell’s target by incorporating intimate items such as hair, nail clippings, and bodily fluids. They may also be daubed with the target’s usual perfume, or dressed in their favored colors, or crafted from clothing or bedding belonging to the spell’s target.

Poppets may be pierced or embellished with modern pins and needles, but spikes, thorns, and needles from plants like blackthorn, cacti, and roses may also be used. Poppets may also be decorated with charms. A poppet to protect someone from the Evil Eye might be embellished with Evil Eye beads and tiny mirrors, for example. Poppets may be created at any time, but in memory of Bridget Bishop, today is ideal. It’s also the perfect time to learn and practice the craft.

June 11

Mater Matuta and the Matralia

The Matralia was a Roman feast honoring the goddesses Mater Matuta and Fortuna, whose temples once stood side by side in Rome’s Forum Boarium, the commercial center of the city. The remains of these temples lie in Rome’s Sant’Omobono archaeological site. More information about Fortuna is found in

the entry for [April 1](#).

Mater Matuta is the guardian of newborns. Today is her annual feast. Matuta is traditionally offered flowers and round cakes, baked in clayware, similar to a modern *Romertopf*. Offerings may be left for her at home shrines, but she also accepts them at harbors.

The Matralia was a particularly ancient festival and, as with many festivals celebrated primarily by women, documented information is fragmentary and mysterious. Celebrated only by free women who were either unmarried or only married once, they offered prayers at the shrine of Mater Matuta on behalf of their sisters' children, not their own. Today is an opportunity to seek blessings and work protection magic for your own nieces and nephews.

AMULETS FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN

The following are considered beneficial amulets for protecting newborns, babies, and small children: antique or skeleton key; smooth coral beads, ideally pink or orange colored; or Evil Eye beads. These may be consecrated or put into use at any time, but today is an excellent opportunity to seek the blessings of Mater Matuta, if so desired. (You may also request blessings from any other trusted deity, guardian angel, or ancestral spirits.)

If seeking Matuta's blessings, be ready to request them from her at the crack of dawn. Alternatively, leave them overnight in a safe area where they will be exposed to the first rays of the sun. Place the amulets near where the baby sleeps or spends a significant amount of time, but be sure to keep them out of reach, as they are potentially choking hazards. Incorporating into a mobile is an excellent method of employ. The power of these amulets is radiated, and so they do not need actual physical contact to be protective.

June 12

Loving Day

This annual celebration commemorates the anniversary of the 1967 US Supreme Court landmark decision *Loving v. Virginia*, which struck down the last anti-miscegenation laws in the US, which banned "interracial marriages." Although today does celebrate love, its name derives from the plaintiffs, Richard and Mildred Loving, a white man and a Black woman, who wed legally in

Washington, DC, in 1958. Not realizing that their marriage would be illegal in Virginia, they were arrested after returning to Richmond, their hometown. Pleading guilty to charges of “cohabiting as man and wife, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth,” the Lovings were only able to avoid prison by leaving Virginia and promising not to return for twenty-five years. Back in Washington, DC, they contacted Robert Kennedy, then US Attorney General, who referred them to the ACLU. Following the unanimous Supreme Court ruling, the Lovings returned to Virginia. The holiday’s intent is to fight racial prejudice and build multiracial communities. Loving Day celebrations are held throughout the US and internationally.

Although tomorrow is the actual feast of Anthony of Padua, it’s celebrated today in Brazil, where he is considered a romantic saint and where today is the equivalent of American Valentine’s Day. Anthony is an especially responsive saint and it’s never too early to make a request. Ask him to “find” what you seek romantically—whether it’s finding true love or the perfect wedding venue.

Saint of the Day

SAINT ONOFRIO

Onofrio (English name: Humphrey, but that’s rarely used), who died c. 400, lived as a hermit in the Egyptian desert for over seventy years, subsisting only on the fruit of the date palm that grew in front of the cave that he called home. Although his clothes rotted away and were not replaced, Onofrio’s hair and beard grew long enough to cover him modestly. Onofrio is traditionally portrayed as a naked elderly man, clothed only in his hair or sometimes a strategically placed palm leaf, alone or in the company of angels.

Considered a holy man while alive, Onofrio vowed, on his deathbed, to respond to all pure and sincere requests and prayers dedicated to him, a vow that he is apparently still fulfilling. He remains especially popular in Iberian folk magic. Although he may be invoked at any time, today is his feast and he is especially responsive. Onofrio has numerous magical specialties and is invoked for hair growth and to prevent baldness. He is a miracle healer, especially invoked for burns of any kind, as well as melanomas. As the guardian of careers

and finances, he is invoked for help with money and employment—both finding and keeping jobs. And paradoxically, considering his own isolated life, in the afterlife he has emerged as a patron of romance, requested to help find and keep love.

Traditionally addressed as “Glorious Saint,” requests are put to him formally. For example, begin an invocation to him by saying something like, “*Oh, Glorious Saint, dear Saint Onofrio, please fulfill my request and. . .*” (Fill in the blank by clearly and concisely stating your desire.) It wouldn’t hurt to accompany petitions with charitable donations. Although potentially anyone’s saint, Onofrio’s special patronage extends to travelers and weavers. Before his death, Onofrio specified his own preferred offering, requesting that incense be burned.

June 13

World Gin Day

Today is a celebration of this alcoholic beverage. The name “gin” derives from the Latin *juniperus* or juniper plant. At its simplest, gin is a neutral spirit that has been infused with botanicals that must—by law—include juniper berries. Juniper, a small evergreen with a wide range, is among the trees closely associated with witchcraft, simultaneously considered a “witching tree” and used to protect against malefic magic. Its berries have a pleasant flavor and are used in cooking, as well as for infusing alcohol and magic spells.

Considered an erotic plant, its berries and branches are incorporated into magic spells for love and sex. Its presence is also believed to promote powers of clairvoyance and other psychic skills. Juniper berries have a long history in herbal medicines, especially as menstrual regulators, able to jump-start irregular or sluggish cycles. [**SAFETY WARNING:** those who are pregnant or seek to conceive should not consume juniper in any form, as it can stimulate miscarriage.]

Juniper berries are now classified among superfoods, as they are full of antioxidants and flavonoids. They reputedly help prevent heart disease, improve digestion and blood circulation, and fight inflammation as well as kidney and liver disease.

Specific magical uses of gin vary depending on which botanicals are used to flavor it. Some gins are complexly flavored; others are quite simple. Read the

ingredients listed on the bottle, or alternatively infuse your gin with the herbs of your choice. Example: use pink peppercorns for an enhanced romance potion.

Incorporate gin into love spells or use it to cleanse bedrooms, boudoirs, or magical areas of your home, for example, the place where you practice divination. Sprinkle it as if it were Florida Water. (See [April 12](#) for more information.) Like Florida Water, gin contains alcohol—do not apply to surfaces that may be damaged.

SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA

Anthony of Padua is considered among the greatest of saints and is certainly among the most beloved. Today, his primary feast, is the anniversary of the historical saint's death in 1231.

The historical Anthony was a sharp-tongued, devout ascetic. That is the official Saint Anthony. Unofficially and famously, Anthony has emerged as a kind-hearted, friendly, nonjudgmental, and responsive saint who provides small miracles for everyone—not just Catholics. He is a favorite of witches including Italy's stregas and is syncretized to numerous African Diaspora spirits, notably Papa Legba and New Orleans folk saint Monsieur Agoussou.

National beverages are excellent offerings for ancestors deriving from those places, even if all you know about those ancestors is where they came from. Thus, gin is suitable for English ancestors, Scotch whisky for those from Scotland, and tej honey wine for those from Ethiopia.

The syncretism may not stop there. Many, puzzled by Anthony's change of nature in the afterlife, believe banished Pagan deities lurk beneath the mask of the official saint, in particular Adonis, responsible for Anthony's romantic associations, and Mercury, responsible for his speed, friendly nature, and cleverness.

Crucially, Saint Anthony *finds*. He may be petitioned for virtually anything, as long as it is in the context of *finding*. In addition to finding lost objects, Anthony finds jobs for devotees, as well as love, good health, elusive diagnoses, fertility, money, missing people or animals, and whatever else you seek. He traditionally responds to a little rhyme:

*“Tony, Tony, look around!
“Something’s lost and must be found.”*

After repeating the rhyme, tell Anthony specifically what must be found. Anthony is a bit of a trickster, so be careful how you phrase your requests. Be clear and detailed. If he likes you, he may hide objects, just so you’ll ask him to find them. Saint Anthony enjoys a drink, preferably an alcoholic beverage—he’s not picky, whatever you have in the house that you would drink, too, will be fine. He loves calla lilies and white or brown candles. Tuesday is his sacred day. Those who develop close relationships with him may wish to give him a little something on a weekly basis. Anthony will share altar space with Expedite, who may be his alter ego, as well as Saints Martha and Lucy. Offerings may be made to all of them on Tuesdays. Anthony is also allegedly among those few whose presence on an altar is tolerated by Santa Muerte, who typically prefers solitary space.

MONSIEUR AGOUSSOU

Monsieur Agoussou (Kreyol version: *Miché Agoussou*), also sometimes called Yon Sue, is a spirit or folk saint of New Orleans who originates in Dahomey but is syncretized to Anthony of Padua and shares Anthony’s feast. At his root lies Agasou, the leopard spirit, patron and perhaps ancestor of Dahomean royalty. He is the guardian of traditional Dahomean traditions, religious and otherwise. Associated with royalty, Agasou is syncretized to King Saint Louis, whose feast is on [August 25](#). Please see that entry for more information about the original spirit, the Leopard King.

Monsieur Agoussou is primarily associated with romance and sexuality; at his core is charisma, dignity, power, and virility. He is among the spirits allegedly invoked by Marie Laveau. Images of Saint Anthony are used to represent him. Some tie a red ribbon around Anthony’s neck to distinguish its use as Agoussou.

As *Vert Agoussou* (*Vert* means green in French), he helps devotees with money and work: burn green candles for him. As a spirit of romance, his favored color is red. Devotees wear red ribbons around their neck and embellish altars and statues with them. Burn red candles for him.

PAPA LEGBA

In some African Diaspora traditions, because of his eloquence and his trickster nature, Papa Legba is associated with Saint Anthony. By extension, today is a

feast for him, too. Please see [January 18](#) for more information about this important orisha.

June 14

Protection Magic

Protection spells are intended to repel, prevent, or remove danger using magical means. See [April 3](#) for more information about protection magic and spells. Protection spells are, of course, cast as needed, but many magical practitioners schedule them on a regular basis as a kind of maintenance, even if the need isn't urgent. Today's date, so close to the solstice, is ideal. An effective protection spell shines a spotlight on hidden danger, banishing it the way turning on kitchen or bathroom lights sends cockroaches scurrying. Remember, protection spells are most effective when accompanied by other methods of protection including locks, legal action, law enforcement, and whatever else may be required for your own personal situations. It is not a substitute for these.

War Water

As its name signifies, this is a particularly assertive form of protection magic, believed capable of repelling spells and curses, even those cast by powerful practitioners. Beneficial for encouraging troublesome neighbors and others encroaching on your territory to surrender, sprinkle it around the boundary of your property (whether land, office, or other space) as a protective spiritual barrier. Different recipes exist. This is a basic, standard variant:

1. Place iron nails in a mason jar, ideally cut iron nails, as they rust easily, but any nails will do *providing* that they are iron.
2. Add enough water to cover the nails and close the jar with a lid. Although the lid should be left on most of the time, remove it occasionally to encourage oxidation and rust.
3. Place the jar in a cool, dry place, where it will not be disturbed, and wait for rust to form, typically about a week to ten days. While you're waiting, if desired, you may request blessings of iron-affiliated spirits like Ogun or

Mars on your potion.

4. Once rust is visible, you can add more water, if desired. Strain the water and use as needed. Retain the nails and add more water to the jar. Some keep War Water jars in their refrigerators for years, similar to sourdough starters. However, should bacteria or mold ever appear in your jar, discard the whole thing, mason jar, nails, and all, and start over. [**SAFETY WARNING:** War Water is for external use only. It must *never* be consumed. Keep it out of reach of children and animals.]

For those planning to celebrate Saint Vitus tomorrow or request his blessings, remember it's traditional to dance all night tonight, the eve of his feast.

June 15

The Vestalia

Today concludes this eight-day festival. Please see [June 7](#) for more information about the holiday and the goddess it honors. The Temple of Vesta was ritually cleansed today, and sweepings were disposed of in Rome's Tiber River. By extension, today is an excellent opportunity to cleanse and organize altars, shrines, and other sacred spaces.

Spirit of the Day

MARIE LAVEAU

Marie Laveau—spirit medium, Voodoo priestess, diviner, snake charmer, philanthropist, successful businesswoman, and community leader—has been described as the Pope of Voodoo and the Holy Mother of New Orleans. The subject of legend, lore, movies, TV, literature, songs, and comic books,

numerous spells and rituals are attributed to her, whether or not she actually created them, as, for instance the magical formula you'll find here.

The historical Marie Laveau was born a free woman of color in New Orleans in approximately 1795 of blended African, European, and Native American ancestry. Marie's influence on Voodoo and New Orleans, but also on the history of magical practice in general, cannot be overestimated. Until the emergence of Marie Laveau, Voodoo (spelled in this way to differentiate it from the traditions of Haitian Vodou) was practiced discreetly in the shadows, as it was persecuted and suppressed. Marie practiced publicly and encouraged others to do so, too. Marie became a local celebrity, both admired and feared. She presided over huge Saint John's Eve festivities at the Bayou Saint John, attended by tourists and onlookers as well as genuine devotees.

Depending on spiritual perspective, Marie is now considered a folk saint or a lwa. If she is a lwa, then she may belong to the Ezili family of spirits (please see [June 9](#)). Her grave in New Orleans' St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is the second greatest pilgrimage site in the US, eclipsed only by Elvis at Graceland. Devotees visit to pay tribute and seek favors. Although anything may be requested, Marie's specialties are legal and love issues. An active participant in the Underground Railroad's fight against slavery, Marie may also be invoked against modern human trafficking.

Today, the anniversary of her death in 1881, is celebrated as her feast. She is also honored on Saint John's Eve (June 23) and September 10, believed to be her birthday. Marie's ghost reputedly haunts the French Quarter, especially Saint Ann Street, where she lived, but her presence is virtually unavoidable in New Orleans. Traditional offerings for her include pilgrimages to her grave, red anisette, images of snakes or her favorite saints (John the Baptist, Peter, Anthony), seven silver dimes, and fine Creole food.

Marie Laveau Water

This formula, attributed to Marie Laveau, is also sometimes marketed as Blessing Water or Holy Water. It may be used instead of church-blessed water for any magic spells that call for Holy Water. The recipe incorporates Holy Water, and Marie Laveau, who attended mass daily at Saint Louis Cathedral, would have used church-blessed water, but you can decide what Holy Water means to you. (Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for Holy Water for more information.)

1 cup coconut water

1 cup Holy Water

1 cup lavender water or lavender hydrosol or, in a pinch, add 20 drops of good-quality lavender essential oil

1 cup rainwater

1 cup rose water or rose hydrosol; if unable to obtain, substitute 20 drops of good-quality rose geranium essential oil or rose attar

1 cup spring water

1. Blend ingredients together. Quantity may be reduced, but be sure to maintain proportions.
2. Bottle and use for ritual cleansing, healing, enhancing psychic powers, and spiritual protection. Refrigerate if not used immediately.

The Feast of Saint Vitus

Today is the feast of Saint Vitus who reputedly died as a child martyr on this day in 303. Saint Vitus is envisioned as a young boy, either inside a cauldron or surrounded by lions and dogs. He is a master exorcist, who can banish demons and malicious spirits. A powerful healer, his specialties are seizure disorders or any kind of illness that causes the body to twitch, tremble, or shake; sleep disorders including bedwetting; and rabies. Vitus is invoked for a good death, and protects against animal bites, but he also protects animals, too. Donations on behalf of animals are a way to win his favor.

Saint Vitus is closely associated with the dance manias that swept across Europe beginning in the eleventh century. Masses of people danced compulsively, unable to stop, either because they couldn't or because they feared they would die if they did. People danced until they collapsed, often within chapels dedicated to Saint Vitus. All sorts of explanations and theories now explain this; some scholars believe that vestiges of Pagan traditions lie at the very root of these ritualized dances including the Danse Macabre, the Tarantella, and the Saint Vitus Dance. Saint Vitus allegedly cures compulsive dancing but can also cause it if he's angered, or if a devotee has invoked his curse on an enemy. Folk legend says that dancing in front of a statue of Saint Vitus today allegedly ensures a year of good health.

June 16

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Saints of the Day

CYR AND JULITTA

Today is the feast of child saint Cyricus, commonly called Saint Cyr, and his mother Saint Julitta.

The two saints may be invoked independently but are typically venerated together. They are invoked to provide domestic happiness, protect children, restore children's health, and save children's lives under any circumstance. Saint Julitta is also invoked against torture; she is the matron saint of widows, single mothers, and torture victims. Often portrayed together, the son in his mother's arms, Cyr—the more popular of the two—is also portrayed as a little boy, a little boy riding on a boar, or sometimes just as a boar.

June 17

Saints of the Day

MENINA IZILDINHA

Maria Izilda de Castro Ribeiro (June 17, 1897–May 24, 1911), known by devotees as Menina Izildinha, an affectionate diminutive, is a beloved child saint, venerated by Christians, Spiritists, and the nonaffiliated alike. Although she was born in Portugal and died there, the epicenter of her veneration is now in Brazil. She is an unofficial or folk saint.

A devout child who loved to play the piano and displayed a strong devotion to angels and the Blessed Mother, when diagnosed with leukemia in 1911, she suffered bravely and stoically, expressing great concern for how her illness and treatment affected her family's finances. Menina Izildinha is now invoked to protect those who suffer financially because of illness or treatment.

Miracles were attributed to her after her death and even to the current day. Beautiful flowers, especially roses, are said to spontaneously appear in her presence. Today, coinciding with her birthday, is her feast. A matron saint of children, teenagers, and orphans, she protects against poverty, illness, and danger. Light candles and offer her flowers, either in vases or planted in a garden. If she performs a true miracle for you, a pilgrimage to her grave or donations toward its upkeep may be in order.

June 18

The Tears of Isis or Night of the Teardrop

The Egyptian goddess Isis' international following began thousands of years ago. (Please see [March 5](#) for more information about this great goddess.) It is believed that her tears stimulated the annual inundation of the Nile. A festival commemorating and perhaps encouraging this, called the Tears of Isis or the Night of the Teardrop, was celebrated for millennia in Egypt but also far from the Nile.

Vestiges of the festival survive in the modern Egyptian festival *Leylet en Nuktah*, although the holiday now celebrates the Nile rather than the goddess. Because it is timed by the Egyptian calendar, the date is not fixed to our own but takes place in the middle of June. Even far from the Nile, this is a beautiful time to celebrate Isis, the Mistress of Magic, and seek her blessings.

You may celebrate on this date or coordinate with the full moon instead. Her festivals tended to be nocturnal and featured illumination by candles and lamps. During her festivals, homes were decorated with lights in the manner of modern Christmas decorations.

TEARS OF ISIS PROTECTION SPELL

The tears of Isis do more than stimulate Nile floods. Magical legend suggests they manifest on Earth as the vervain plant. As it shares her essence, it carries her blessings of protection.

1. Simmer vervain in wine.
2. Strain. The liquid may be used immediately, but allow the herb to dry completely in a ventilated area, away from direct sunlight.
3. Place the liquid in a spray bottle and use it to cleanse and protect space (be sure to avoid surfaces that may be damaged by the alcohol). Refrigerate for future use.
4. When the vervain is dry, place it in a charm bag. Carrying it allegedly protects against harmful creatures such as snakes, scorpions, and deceptive people.

June 19

Juneteenth

The anniversary of Emancipation Day in Texas (June 19, 1865) was once a local holiday but is now celebrated nationwide. Juneteenth is traditionally celebrated with barbecues, parades, and parties. Red foods and beverages are traditionally featured, such as strawberries, for instance. And yes, the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves in ten US states, occurred on January 1, 1863. However, news of this event did not arrive in Texas until June 19, 1865, more than two years later. Those enslaved in Texas were the last to be freed.

Saint Marron

Today is the feast of New Orleans folk saint Marron, also known as Maron or Maroon. His name is the clue to his identity: *Marron* means “chestnut” or “brown” in French, and it resembles the Spanish word *cimarron* or “wild one,” whose derivative “maroon” became a term for slaves who escaped their shackles, taking back their freedom, especially those who established communities in harsh terrain, encouraging others to emulate and join them.

The Maroon communities of Brazil, Jamaica, and Surinam are most famous, but they existed elsewhere, too, including the Louisiana swamps. Saint Marron is invoked foremost for freedom. He is the patron of those who are enslaved and those who help them regain their freedom. Marron protects runaways of all kinds, especially those seeking safety, as well as prisoners. As relevant now as ever, he is invoked to guard against human trafficking and sexual slavery, to rescue those so enslaved, and to punish perpetrators. No official image of Saint Marron exists, although you may be inspired to create one. Traditionally, images of Saint Raymond Nonnatus, who also has connections to slavery, are used to represent him. (Please see [August 31](#) for more information about Saint Raymond.)

Why is today his feast? The date may indicate Saint Marron’s true identity, too dangerous to speak aloud in the eighteenth century. On June 19, 1784, Jean Saint Malo (Juan San Malo in Spanish), the captured leader of a band of Louisiana Maroons, was hanged in front of Saint Louis Cathedral in then Spanish-ruled New Orleans. Because it was dangerous to publicly proclaim him a hero, devotees did not use his name but called him Saint Marron instead.

SAINT MARRON KEEP THE LAW AWAY

Images of Saint Raymond Nonnatus, standing in for Saint Marron, are used to avert the eyes of immigration officials or others perceived as having the capacity to cause harm. Sprinkle the image with Holy Water, whisper your desires to the saint, and then place the statue somewhere indicating where invisibility is crucial—beside entrance doors, for instance. If placing it in the actual location is impossible, place it atop a photograph of the desired location.



June 20

Today is the earliest date that the summer solstice can occur in the Northern Hemisphere. Midsummer's celebrations may be transferred to the summer solstice, as desired. Please see [June 23](#) and [24](#).

On June 20, 1893, a jury deliberated for just an hour and a half before acquitting Lizzie Borden for murdering her father and stepmother. The acquittal was controversial; no one else was ever tried for the murders. To avail yourself of some of Lizzie's magic, should you need it, create a botanical charm bag. In a well-known photo, Borden wears a pansy-shaped brooch and pansies are now strongly associated with her. Fill a small purple bag—the color of victory—with dried pansy blossoms. Add a High John the Conqueror root for legal success and dried black-eyed Susans, which represent justice in the language of flowers. A daylily cultivar named for Borden (*Hemerocallis* “Lizzie Borden”) is rare and must be grown in one's own garden. Add dried flower petals, if available, but the image of this daylily taken from the internet may also be added. Charge the bag by holding it in your hands, while focusing on your desires and then carry as needed.

June 21

Spirit of the Day

SHIVA

Lord Shiva is credited as the founder of yoga. In his earliest incarnations, he may have been a horned god. An image widely identified as Shiva and found among the ruins of Mohenjo Daro (c. 2000 BCE) depicts him seated in the yoga lotus position and crowned with bull's horns. According to his mythos, Shiva manifested at the very beginning of time in the form of a pillar of fire from which the entire world eventually emerged. An indigenous, pre-Aryan deity, his popularity was so great that, despite initial resistance, he was incorporated into the Hindu pantheon. He is now counted among the *Trimurti*, Hinduism's triad of primary deities.

Among the most beloved deities on Earth, Shiva manifests as an ascetic *sadhu*—a holy person who renounces conventional existence in favor of total devotion to spirituality and contemplation of the sacred. Shiva is envisioned as a wild god, wearing animal skins, his hair long and matted. He is portrayed as having light blue or ashy bluish-gray skin, referencing a myth in which he successfully swallowed poison to save the world. He survived but was forever marked. Shiva has one thousand eight names and numerous aspects. As Shiva Mahayogi, he is the Lord of Self-Discipline who epitomizes the master spiritual adept, while as Shiva Bhuteshvara, he is the lord of ghosts and goblins, shades and spirits, leading them but also controlling them.

Today, as International Yoga Day, is an ideal day to venerate him. Shiva dwells on Mount Kailash, the sacred peak in the Himalayas with his consort Parvati. Invoked for healing and fertility, he is the guardian of animals, trees, and wild nature. A lunar deity, the Hindu month of *Sravana* is dedicated to him. He is traditionally offered flowers and fruits, especially coconuts, as well as items of beauty and spiritual power.

June 22

Today is the day *before* one of the *most* magically powerful nights of the year: June 23 is Midsummer's Eve and June 24 is Midsummer's Day. Unless there is an absolute emergency, in which case, of course, cast spells as needed, why not wait the extra day to avail yourself of this extra power boost?

Today is a good day to plan Midsummer's rituals and spells, and make sure you have your supplies in order, be they candles, botanicals, material for a bonfire, or other magical goods.

Today is a good day to boost your psychic power to be at your best on Midsummer's. This may be as simple as getting some extra sleep and rest, especially if you're planning all night revels tomorrow but esoteric methods exist, too.

Psychic Power Spells

The purpose of psychic power spells is twofold: to enhance psychic ability but also to counteract psychic depletion. If you are tired or stressed, if you've been ill, malnourished, or suffer from sleep deprivation, if you suffer from abuse or trauma, or if you've been doing a lot of magical work without replenishing your magical energy, your own personal psychic forces are likely depleted. It's like driving a car on only gas fumes, having failed to refill the tank: you won't get very far. Luckily, there are methods of replenishment. Here are some suggestions:

HIBISCUS PSYCHIC POWER TEA

1. Create an infusion by pouring boiling water over dried hibiscus flowers, peppermint, and lemongrass. Adjust the proportions to your liking. Peppermint and lemongrass may be used either dried or fresh. Spearmint or lemon verbena may be substituted respectively, but there's no substitute for the hibiscus.
2. Don't gulp down the tea. Sit with it while it infuses, inhaling its steam and interpreting the patterns it makes. Then sip slowly, paying attention to how you feel as you drink it. If you're energized, all is well. If tired, make sure to get some extra rest, as it's an indication that your energy is depleted.

Other tools of psychic empowerment—to be used whenever needed and appropriate—include crystals such as moonstone, sodalite, selenite, quartz crystal, and smoky quartz; botanicals such as mugwort, yarrow, wormwood, rosemary, benzoin, vetiver, and roses; and flower essence remedies such as Angelica, Angel's Trumpet, Green Bells of Ireland, and Star Tulip.

June 23

Tonight is Saint John's Eve, also known as Midsummer's Eve, among the most powerfully magical nights of the year. An ancient festival, although the original Midsummer's Eve was intended to coincide with the summer solstice (as does the modern Wiccan sabbat of Litha), and was thus a moveable feast, it is now a fixed date associated with the feast of John the Baptist. In North Africa, tonight's feast may be associated with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, rather than Saint John. (Details of Saint John are found in the entry for [June 24](#). For more information about Solstice and Litha, please see "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#).") If tonight coincides with the solstice, as it may, consider it an extra, supersonic power boost.

Many of tonight and tomorrow's spells and rituals involve harvesting and picking plants. These are old traditions that first emerged when plants were not as severely endangered as they are today. Please harvest responsibly. Remember to thank the plant spirits and make offerings to Earth to maintain proper spiritual balance.

While Midsummer's does not always coincide with the solstice, it shares many of the same concerns. In the northern hemisphere, the summer solstice marks the longest day and shortest night—the sun is at the height of its powers. This has been interpreted as representing the marriage between the sun and Earth, as well as the sacred union of fire and water. Although Midsummer's has its equals (Halloween and Walpurgis, for instance), no night is *more* magical. Pick your magical moment or celebrate for an entire forty-eight hours, whatever suits you best. No need to wait for nightfall to start celebrating: the magic is in the air all day today and then tomorrow, too.

Midsummer's is dedicated to fire and water magic, as well as the magic of plants. Botanicals gathered tonight and tomorrow, especially at potent times such as midnight or sunrise, are believed to be among the most powerful spell ingredients of all. Therapeutic properties of plants are also believed to be enhanced if picked now. Botanicals harvested tonight bestow long-term benefits. Divining rods crafted from mistletoe or witch hazel are believed to magically lead to treasure. The crafting and dowsing may be done at any time, but the material must be gathered today. If you wish to create your own pendulum, tonight would be the ideal time.

Many cultures identify specific plants as being especially magical, for example mugwort in Poland. In Russian folk culture, *any* plant is a magical plant *provided* it's picked between midnight and dawn on Midsummer's Eve, preferably with dew clinging to it. That's technically June 24, but you need to be prepared and in place tonight. Optimum moments are precisely midnight or when dew is apparent. It's considered lucky to roll around in Midsummer's dew or, at least, bathe your face with it.

Midsummer's Eve bonfires are lit. Wheels are lit on fire and rolled down hills, sometimes coming to rest in seas, lakes, or rivers, possibly intended to represent the sun at its highest point, beginning its descent toward its nadir at the winter solstice.

It's also an ideal time for spiritual baths. Gather at lakes, springs, and the sea to take the waters, or create ritual baths at home. Incorporate flowers and plants as much as possible. Puerto Rican tradition recommends walking backward into the sea three times at the stroke of midnight tonight to ensure good luck and blessings.

Solitary urbanites: don't feel left out. Create a private Midsummer's Eve: light candles instead of bonfires—even battery-operated candles are preferable to none—and enjoy magical baths or showers if springs are inaccessible. If possible, visit a lake or beach tonight or tomorrow. Midsummer's is intended to bring joy, not stress, and to encourage you to feel magical and powerful.

As this is an especially beneficial time for rituals to protect animals, cows and horses are driven between bonfires, the smoke believed to have protective properties. The animals may then be encouraged into lakes or springs or, where living bodies of water are not available, sprinkled with magical potions. (If casting spells for animals, make sure that botanicals used are not harmful to them and that animals are not mistreated, even unintentionally.)

Witches reputedly fly tonight, as they do on Walpurgis and Halloween. Mountain peaks such as Bald Mountain, as well as remote crossroads, were once favored spots for tonight's witches' balls, partially because those are power spots but also because of the privacy afforded by remote places. If locations like these are not viable for you, remember: anywhere witches convene becomes magical because of their presence.

Saint John's Eve is a sacred night in New Orleans Voodoo. High Priestess Marie Laveau, a devotee of John the Baptist, presided over rituals at the Bayou St. John tonight. (See [June 16](#) for more information about Laveau.)

Botanicals especially associated with Midsummer's include mugwort, Saint John's wort, tarragon, wormwood, lavender, mullein, mandrake, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, rue, orpine, hazel, and rowan. Throw nine different types of herbs into the bonfire. When the fires have died out and the ashes have cooled, collect them to put in charm bags for good luck.

Although any spell cast tonight will benefit from the power of the hour, some spells are specific to the event, for example the following two divination spells.

Midsummer's Divinations

ARTICHOKE DIVINATION

An Italian folk custom suggests placing artichokes or cardoons in Midsummer's bonfires, but only for a bit. Keep an eye on them and, once scorched, carefully remove them. Place them in a glass of water while focusing on a question or plan of action. If they appear to regenerate within twenty-four hours, your outcome is positive. If they do not, proceed with caution, if at all.

SEVEN FLOWERS DIVINATION

Pick seven flowers tonight and place them beneath your pillow to dream of your beloved.

That's the traditional spell. But maybe dreaming of your beloved isn't the oracle you seek. Adjust the outcome by carefully selecting flowers that reflect the nature of your quest.

To dream of specific spirits or saints, place their favorite flowers beneath your pillow—roses for Maria Padilha, for example, or carnations for Saint Expedite and white lilies for Saint Anthony. To receive messages from loved ones beyond the grave, try chrysanthemums or wormwood. To receive financially inspiring dreams, try cabbage flowers.

THE WATER OF SAINT JOHN

Place containers filled with water outside overnight tonight. If it's raining, place empty vessels outside to catch the rain. Plain water is fine, but you may also add any of the flowers and plants associated with Saint John's Eve such as Saint John's Wort or mugwort. Place the containers outside anytime after twilight on

the 23rd—windowsills and balconies are fine—but they *must* be brought inside before dawn on the 24th.

Strain out the plant material before bottling. Label and save for use as needed.

The Water of Saint John is incorporated into spiritual cleansings, especially to break or prevent malicious spells. It is used to enhance clairvoyance and protect against the Evil Eye. If you fear you yourself possess the Evil Eye and may harm others, bathing your eyes with it is believed to neutralize it. (Just be sure it's safe for your eyes.)

Ivan Kupalo or Kupala Night

In Russia, Midsummer's Eve is known as Ivan Kupalo or Kupala Night. The words *kupalo* and *kupala* derive from the Russian verb *kupat'*: "to bathe." Kupala is an ancient Slavic goddess of fertility, magic, and water.

The summer solstice is Kupala's sacred day. Her ancient rites included magical bonfires and ritual bathing. Kupala's consort is named Kupalo. They are envisioned as two beautiful young people, who consummate their relationship tonight. After Russia's conversion to Christianity, the festival remained, but the feast of Saint John was superimposed over Kupala's Night—John's associations with baptism and the magical powers of water made this an easy fit.

Ivan is the Russian equivalent of John. Even though so many of the Pagan aspects of this festival survived in practice, it was still rechristened with a masculine name. Ivan Kupalo is the magical aspect of John the Baptist, reconceived as a green magician rather than the biblical desert hermit. As elsewhere, this is a time for harvesting botanicals and crafting magical tools, dancing in mountain glades, visiting natural springs, and searching for the magical fern that blooms tonight. It grants powers of invisibility to the one who finds and picks it tonight—and only tonight. How will you find it? It resembles an innocuous fern, until the magic moment, when it begins to glow. But pick it fast, as this glow is only temporary.



Saint John's Eve

The names Midsummer's Eve and Saint John's Eve are often used synonymously. Tomorrow is the feast of John the Baptist, and more information about the saint is found in the entry for [June 24](#). Tonight is ideal for accessing John's magic powers. He is a great healer, and petitions may be addressed to him tonight as well as tomorrow. John is closely associated with botanicals.

THE HERBS OF SAINT JOHN

The following seven plants are known as the Herbs of Saint John: hawkweed, mistletoe, mullein, mugwort, orpine, wormwood, and Saint John's Wort, John's signature plant.

1. Toss all seven into Midsummer's bonfires.
2. After the fires have burned out and the remnants are cool enough to handle, collect ashes.
3. Place them in a charm bag to serve as an amulet that will attract love, romance, friendship, and fertility.

Spirits and Saints of the Night

AINE

Irish solar goddess Aine reigns at the peak of her powers tonight. Once perhaps Ireland's preeminent goddess, she was not forgotten after Paganism was banned, but demoted to the status of fairy queen, although she retains her power. Tonight is among the best times to seek her favors or establish a connection with Aine. (See also Lughnasa, [August 1](#).) Torches are crafted from hay and straw; the smoke emanating from them, believed to transmit Aine's blessings, is wafted (safely!) over cattle, crops, and women for enhanced fertility and spiritual protection.

Aine is a romantic goddess, requested for assistance with love. She heals infertility and is claimed as an ancestral goddess by many of Ireland's ancient families. Her color is red, and she may manifest as a red mare. Alternatively, she appears as a dazzlingly beautiful woman. Light red candles for her.

BLANC DANI

Among the spirits of New Orleans Voodoo who are venerated tonight is *Blanc Dani* ("White Danny"), a local manifestation of snake deity Damballah. (Please

see [March 1.](#))

HERODIAS

Queen Herodias flies at midnight on Midsummer's Eve seated upon a shining ray of fire that serves as a beacon, leading the way for witches to travel to their night assemblies. In Italy, tonight is Witches' Night, and Herodias is the Queen Witch. Midsummer's Eve is also Saint John's Eve. Many believe Herodias, the woman responsible for John's death, owns tonight, just as he owns tomorrow.

The historical Herodias, Princess of Judaea, died in approximately 47 CE. The granddaughter of Herod the Great, Herodias was the wife of Herod Antipas, whom she married after divorcing his brother Philip. Her remarriage could, according to technicalities of Jewish law, be considered as incest, and the couple was very vocally criticized, especially by John the Baptist. Determined to rid herself of John, Herodias enlisted Salomé, her teenage daughter from her first marriage. According to the famous legend, Salomé performed the Dance of the Seven Veils and created such an impression that Herod promised her *anything* as a reward. Coached by her mother, Salomé requested John's head on a platter.

Many medieval Europeans considered Herodias to be a goddess. It's unclear whether the historical woman was deified or whether her name was borrowed to camouflage veneration of another goddess, possibly Lilith, brought to Italy by Jews exiled there following the Roman destruction of Judaea. Ruthenius, Bishop of Verona (c. 887–974), complained that Herodias was treated as a queen and goddess. In 936, he outlawed a movement that suggested Herodias owns one-third of the world and is thus due veneration and offerings.

A Witch Queen, akin to Hulda, Herta, and Berchta (see [January 5](#)), Herodias (or Erodjade, as her name is also spelled) is ranked among the leaders of the Wild Hunt. She may ride alongside Diana. Together they preside over witches' balls tonight, distributing riches. It's an excellent time to request her blessings, should you seek them. Herodias was a queen in life and expects devotees to treat her like one now.

It is traditional to feast with her, rather than simply placing offerings on an altar. Witches seeking to celebrate her may give her a place of honor at a witches' ball or banquet. She is happy to share altar space with Salomé and Diana.

Fairies and Sânziene Eve

Midsummer is one of the three great fairy festivals, alongside May Eve and

Halloween (see [April 30](#) and [October 31](#)). For those practicing the Fairy Faith, tonight is a holy night. If you long to see, contact, or otherwise celebrate fairies, this is the perfect time. The fairies troop tonight, emerging from their mounds in processions known as cavalcades. Allegedly gazing through hag stones or holed stones (small rocks with natural holes) enables one to see them. Certain types of fairy-related activity—for example, returning changelings—can only be accomplished on a very few nights of the year, and tonight is one of them. Although fairies may be dangerous, they are also powerful healers, and may be feeling generous tonight. Tomorrow is International Fairy Day. (Please see [June 24](#).)

Don't fall asleep beneath a hawthorn tree tonight. Better yet, don't even sit within its shade. The tree is sacred to the fairies, and as the veil between realms is especially sheer at this time, you may easily fall into their world or under their influence.

The Sânzienne are a species of fairies from Romania. Unlike many other types of fairies, the Sânzienne are gentle, kind, and generous to people. Powerful healers, they bring prosperity and fertility to humans, birds, and animals, and protect us from suffering. They imbue plants with magic powers. Their name derives from that of the goddess Diana, and these fairies may be her Romanian retinue.

Tonight, their festival, predates associations with John the Baptist. Local folk tradition suggests that the heavens open up tonight, empowering all botanicals and spells cast, especially those for love and romance. In recent years, it's become a night associated with paranormal sightings and events, too.

June 24

Midsummer's Day

Although June 24 is the date for Midsummer's Day, the hours between midnight and dawn are still considered Midsummer's Eve in the same way that Halloween does not terminate at the moment the calendar date becomes November 1.

Activities described in the entry for [June 23](#) continue into today.

In general, for maximum magic, botanicals must be gathered between midnight—the threshold between June 23 and 24—and sunrise, but Midsummer’s Day continues the celebrations of last night. If unable to revel on Saint John’s Eve, enjoy the magic today. Botanicals may be gathered during the daytime, too, up until the last moments of this date. In general, Midsummer Day is calmer than Midsummer Night. If possible, spend the day relaxing, celebrating, and flexing your magic powers.

Rain today is considered a harbinger of a poor harvest to come, although today’s rain itself is considered imbued with magic power. Bottle and preserve it for use in potions and spells.

International Fairy Day

This holiday acknowledges ages-old associations between Midsummer and the Fair Folk. Fairy devotees can cast spells focused on fairies, but it’s also a good day to read fairytales and learn about the innumerable varieties of fairies worldwide.

Saint and Spirit of the Day

FORTUNA

Today marks the festival of *Fors Fortuna*, dedicated to the goddess Fortuna. Please see [January 1](#) for more information about Fortuna. Pay tribute or request her blessings. Request a change of fortune, if needed.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Today is the feast of John the Baptist, that most magical of saints. It is a highly unusual feast, as it celebrates John’s birth, rather than his death, as is more typical for saints. John the Baptist is believed able to fulfill *any* request and perform *any* miracle. He banishes nightmares, demons, and spiritual dangers. A great healer, he is invoked to heal seizure and convulsive disorders. He protects

against migraines and other headaches. A macabre medieval prescription encourages contemplating John's severed head to make your own feel better. (For those preferring botanical solutions, weaving and wearing a wreath made from freshly harvested mugwort today reputedly banishes migraines for a year.)

John is the patron saint of those on Death Row, as well as prisoners, swordsmiths, those who care for birds, chimneysweeps, orphans, and foundlings, especially those left on doorsteps and thresholds. He is the guardian of witches, magicians, midwives, Freemasons, and anyone who works with herbs in any capacity or just loves them. John is the patron of natural springs and water magic.

SAINT JOHN'S WORT MIDSUMMER SPELLS

Although associated with all plants, John's special plant is the one named in his honor, Saint John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).

Oracle

1. Pick blossoming Saint John's Wort at midnight, the threshold between June 23 and 24.
2. Leave them to rest overnight.
3. The next day, take a look at the blossoms:
 - If the blossoms are still fresh in the morning, anticipate a lucky year to come.
 - If the blossoms have faded, take protective measures against bad luck and trouble.
 - If there's a combination, don't worry but take some protective measures.

Conception Spell

Folk wisdom suggests that if a naked, silent woman picks a sprig of Saint John's Wort from her garden at either midnight or dawn on June 24, she will conceive within the year.

June 25

Today may be spent recovering from Midsummer's festivities or working with botanicals collected yesterday. Unless using them immediately, herbs should be dried to increase their shelf life. Once dried, they should be kept in a cool, ventilated area away from direct sunlight. All kinds of drying equipment and technology may be obtained from herbal supply companies; however, this is an ancient art, easily and inexpensively accomplished, too.

Urbanites and those lacking botanical bounty: this is still a good time to enjoy botanicals, crafting them into spells or just playing with them, whether in gardens or flowerpots. After the intense energies of the past few days and with more magical power days to follow shortly, today is ideally a day of relaxed pleasure and respite.



Drying Botanicals

1. Organize the botanicals by type: in other words, keep the roses together, the mugwort together, each individual species separate. If you have a lot, subdivide into small bunches.
2. Hang them upside down by attaching to either a wire hanger or a professional herb dryer (these resemble horizontal ladders.)
3. Let them hang in a well-ventilated area outside of direct sunlight until they've completely dried. Many dried botanicals are beautiful and can serve as decorations as well as spell or therapeutic materials.

June 26

Today is a quiet day, betwixt and between a series of magically charged ones—an excellent opportunity to relax and replenish your energy. If you have harvested botanicals or crafted amulets, today is a great time to play with them and familiarize yourself with their powers. Cleanse and charge crystals. Pull cards for yourself or otherwise seek oracles for the remaining year. Make preparations for forthcoming holidays, such as Lammas on August Eve. If you have spent a lot of time reveling, this may be a good day to catch up on all sorts

of mundane activities, such as bills and housekeeping that may have fallen by the wayside.

Magical Replenishment Bath

Add milk and either fresh flowers of the season or your favorite perfume to a warm bath to soothe nerves and magically replenish your personal power. Add flower essences such as yarrow or angelica to help ground you following what may have been intense spiritual pursuits.



June 27

PTSD Awareness Day

PTSD stands for post-traumatic stress disorder and names a condition that may occur in response to trauma and traumatic events, the lingering effects of the aftermath of shock. Most famously associated with soldiers and veterans, there are many kinds of trauma, and many who suffer from the disorder do so in silence or at least attempt to do so. The US Senate designated June 27 as the national PTSD Awareness Day in 2010. Different individuals have different needs. Many conventional psychological and physical treatments, such as anti-anxiety medications, are available.

Some esoteric treatments may also be beneficial. Please research and seek professional advice for more information. What follows is but a small sampling:

- Flower Essence Remedies include Alaskan Healing Essences Fireweed and White Fireweed, Australian Bush Flower Essences Isis and Wisteria

(recommended for those suffering sexual trauma), Bach Flower Essences Aspen, Red Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut, Rock Rose, and Star of Bethlehem.

- Homeopathic treatments include Aconite, Arnica, Argentum, and Stramonium.
- Saint Dymphna (see [May 15](#)) is widely considered the saint of PTSD.

Serbian Saint Vitus Eve

The Serbian feast of Saint Vitus, which occurs on June 28, as it adheres to the old-style calendar, is a solemn, religious day, but tonight, the eve of the feast, is widely considered a night when witches and nocturnal spirits hold sway, perfect for casting spells, reveling with fairies and other spirits, and availing yourself of the more magical aspects of Saint Vitus. (Please see [June 15](#) for more information about him.) Tonight may be celebrated in similar fashion to Saint John's Eve on [June 23](#).



June 28

Eve of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

Although considered the founders of organized Christianity, paradoxically Peter and Paul are among the saints most associated with magic spells. Although, while they were alive, the two were rivals rather than allies, as saints they are often venerated and petitioned together. Please see [June 29](#) for more information about these saints.

Some see tonight as akin to Saint John's Eve ([June 23](#)). Rituals, spells, and activities left unresolved may be continued tonight. If you regret leaving something undone, this is a second chance. Decorate doorways with fresh botanicals tonight, including Saint John's Wort, orpine, white lilies, and fennel stalks. Keep lights burning all night. Candles may be easiest now, but were once

prohibitively expensive, and so oil lamps were used. This is not a fire festival in the same way as Saint John's Eve: for many the point is illumination rather than flames, and so battery-operated candles may also be used.

Papa Legba

The West African spirit Eshu Elegbara, known affectionately as Papa Legba, is celebrated today, too, as Peter is the saint to whom he is most often syncretized. Vodou songs imploring "Saint Peter" to open the gates of good fortune are truly directed to Papa Legba. Please see [January 18](#) for more information.

June 29

Saints of the Day

DR. JOSE GREGORIO HERNANDEZ

On this day in 1919—a Sunday—Dr. Jose Gregorio Hernandez, a physician, died at a crossroads in Venezuela, struck down by a car while making a house call and delivering medicine that he had purchased with his own money. Considered a saintly man while alive, he is now a beloved folk saint with a growing following. The cause for his canonization was opened in 1949. He is also venerated by devotees of the magical and spiritual tradition Maria Lionza. (See [October 12](#).)

Dr. Jose Gregorio is the patron of children, medical students, and healers of all kinds. He is invoked to maintain and preserve good health. He provides healing miracles, protects against accidents and malevolent magic, and may be requested for luck, love, and success. He assists medical students with their exams. Invoke his help to locate the best physicians and healers for your specific conditions. Offerings for Dr. Jose Gregorio Hernandez include white candles and flowers, cigarettes, liquor, and charitable donations on behalf of the poor.

Feasts of Saints Peter and Paul

Peter and Paul are among the most significant and important Christian saints. Each has their own feast days, but they share today. They may be venerated together, but if you prefer one to the other, you can focus on your favorite today.

Other than in Malta and Italy, places Paul visited, Peter has the greater following and is invoked in numerous spells. He has another feast on July 31.

SAINT PAUL

Saint Paul (died c. 67 ce) never met Jesus in the flesh but is considered the founder and architect of Christianity as a distinct religion. Paul has dual identities as a saint, both official and unofficial.

Officially, Paul is the patron saint of authors, journalists, travel writers, and publishers. He is invoked for miracle healings, as well as to exorcise evil spirits and protect against snake bite. Unofficially, he has a witch doctor alter ego, associated with snake charming and the tarantella, Italy's spider dance. (Tarantism—the condition of being afflicted with this dance mania—is sometimes called Saint Paul's Disease.) Spiders are his messengers.

SAINT PETER

One of the original Apostles, Saint Peter, whose birth name was Simon, met Jesus through John the Baptist. A tough Galilean fisherman, he was a big guy, and Jesus nicknamed him Cephas, Aramaic for "rock." Translated into Greek, the name became Peter. Serving as Jesus' bodyguard, following the crucifixion, Peter fled to Rome, where he was reputedly crucified by Emperor Nero sometime between 65 and 67 CE. Peter is considered the first pope. Folk tradition says he holds the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and is envisioned as a heavenly gatekeeper, determining who may enter and who may not.

Opiosuchus the Serpent Bearer, the so-called thirteenth constellation of the zodiac, is sometimes interpreted as representing Saint Paul with a snake.

Officially, Peter is the patron saint of fisherman, netmakers, boatbuilders, gatekeepers, locksmiths, masons, and stone workers. He is invoked for healing, especially for podiatric issues, protection, longevity, and to liberate prisoners. Unofficially, Peter is among the most magical saints invoked in all kinds of magic spells including cursing your enemies. He is invoked prior to séances or Ouija board sessions, so as to only permit the arrival of positive, benevolent spirits and to prevent the entry of the malevolent.

A Talisman for Saint Peter

1. Wrap a pair of crossed keys together with red ribbons or yarn.
2. Attach a fishhook to the wrapped keys. (Remember, Peter was a fisherman.)
3. Hang the keys by your front door so that Saint Peter can open the gates of good fortune and prevent misfortune from entering.

June 30

Feast of Hercules and the Muses

A Roman festival dedicated to Hercules *and* the Muses was held annually on this day. The Muses are nine Greek mountain spirits who serve as catalysts and bestowers of creative inspiration and talent, often associated with Apollo. They may seem like strange friends for Hercules; however, he is an extremely multifaceted deity as a guardian of travelers, a protective deity, a patron of men and (male) merchants, and a shamanic figure, able to successfully navigate between the realms of life and death.

As Hercules Musarum (“Hercules of the Muses”), the big bruiser is affiliated with the Muses and is a guardian of culture and inspiration, specifically a patron of music and musicians. He is portrayed with a lyre, rather than his club or the small child he frequently carries.

Hercules and the Muses have a symbiotic relationship. With Hercules’ vigilant protection, the Muses (and creative people) are safe and able to be creative. Hercules’ feats are given eternal life via songs, poems, and performances inspired by the Muses, and the tranquility and serenity of the Muses provide solace to Hercules and relieve his depression.

Among the underlying themes of this festival and this aspect of Hercules are that music promotes harmony, reconciliation, and healing. Music also potentially soothes anxiety, rage, and anger, all of which afflict Hercules himself. Surrounded and influenced by the Muses, Hercules is at his best, and this healing influence can potentially be transmitted to devotees, too. Hercules and the Muses are venerated together. If you have votive imagery, place Hercules in the center with images of the individual Muses surrounding him. Candles may be substituted for statuary. Offer them flowers, incense, and your own creative endeavors.

If you are a musician, poet, or other type of artist, this feast presents an ideal opportunity to seek their assistance with any facet of the creative process, be it seeking inspiration, an end to writer's block, or help with funding.



July

The Romans originally called this month, the seventh of our modern calendar year, *Quintilis*, meaning “five,” and indeed, before calendar reforms, it was the fifth month. In 44 BCE, the month was renamed July to honor Julius Caesar, as it was the month of his birth. (His birth date is either July 12 or 13.) Although July lacks major modern witchcraft festivals, it is a magically powerful month, suited for individual spellcasting.

The first part of the month, until approximately the twenty-first day, falls under Cancer, the only astrological sign ruled by the moon. It’s an excellent time to honor, celebrate, and supplicate lunar spirits including Artemis, Aynia, Diana, Khonsu, Lilith, and Selene. The end of the month falls under Leo, the only astrological sign ruled by the sun. It’s an excellent time to honor, celebrate, and supplicate solar spirits including Aine, Amaterasu, Apollo, Ra, and Sekhmet.

This month is filled with commemorations of revolutions and the birth of the nuclear age, as well as celebrations of some of the most goddess-like saints: Anne, Margaret, Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Sarah.

Angel of July: Verchiel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Cancer and Leo

Bird of the Month: eagle, raven

Birthstone of the Month: ruby

Flowers of the Month: carnation, delphinium, goldenrod, larkspur, lilac, primrose, water lily

July’s Holidays and Extra Power Days

Independence Day: July 4

Bastille Day: July 14

Feast of Saint Christopher, James the Greater, and Ogun: July 25

August Eve, Lammas Eve: July 31

July 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Planchettes and Spirit Boards

The young Fox sisters of upstate New York first communicated with the noisy ghost haunting their home in March 1848. This event marked the beginning of the Spiritualist movement, and so séances were already a national craze by the time the Civil War began in 1861. However, in the aftermath of that war with its staggering number of fatalities, the number of people seeking to contact the dead and establish for themselves whether conscious life exists after death grew exponentially. Simultaneously, scandals regarding con artists posing as mediums arose, causing people to doubt their experiences at organized séances. A desire for private, low-cost, DIY séances arose. By 1880, the spirit board had made its American debut.

Spirit board or witch board is the generic name for a device intended to serve as a portal or communication device with other realms, used to contact spirits and extraterrestrials as well as the dead. The most famous is the trademarked Ouija Board, but between 1890 and 1950, dozens of manufacturers created similar products. A spirit board has two parts:

- A flat board on which the alphabet appears, as well as other words, such as “yes,” “no,” and “goodbye.”
- A planchette—a smaller device that rolls over the board, potentially spelling out words. The modern planchette is typically a heart-shaped piece of hard plastic or wood atop small rollers, although this has not always been the case. *Planchette* means “little plank” in French and was originally the name for the entire system.

Spirit boards may be crafted or used at any time, but the beginning of July, as we enter a period of enhanced solitary magic, is ideal, especially today, as it is the anniversary of the death in 1892 of Kate Fox, the youngest of the Fox sisters, widely considered the most gifted medium of her era.

SPIRIT BOARD SAFETY TIPS

It's best to avoid any kind of magical or spiritual activity that frightens you, whether it's a spirit board, Tarot cards, or crystal balls. Fear tends to attract the fearsome—those spirits who feed on fear and will thus keep you afraid for their own amusement and appetites. Serenity, calmness, and proper precautions promote positive experiences.

Safety precautions include spiritually cleansing the board, area, and participants both before and after the ritual. As with any magical tool, don't leave a spirit board just laying around—it's the equivalent of leaving your front door unlocked. Anyone might enter. Make sure participants and space are protected with amulets. Invoke spiritual aid from gatekeeper spirits, such as Papa Legba, Hekate, Oya, La Madama, Anubis, or Archangel Michael: request that only beneficial spirits be granted entry, while the spiritual riff-raff—or worse!—is shut out. Invite desired spirits by name rather than allowing entry to any who just might happen to appear, and make sure to bid them thank you and goodbye when you're done to make it clear they should leave.

If you are an artist or a woodcrafter, you can create beautiful and permanent spirit boards. However, there's something to be said for a homemade, disposable board, especially if spirit boards make you nervous. The key is that it must be flat and smooth, because otherwise the planchette can't roll. The simplest board is crafted from heavy poster board. Make sure that letters or words are easy to read, keeping enough space between them, so that there's no confusion as to where the planchette lands.

Commercially made planchettes may be used: most have a clear, hard plastic lens through which one can read letters and determine exactly where the planchette has stopped. But other items can be substituted for spontaneity, providing they are smooth and will not scratch the surface or be difficult to roll—large coins or religious medals, for example. An Archangel Michael medal, for example, serves as a protective buffer between you and the spirits, while a Santa Muerte medal might facilitate the process. Consider a Saint Expedite medal if there's no time to waste in making contact. Alternatively, a shot glass or small tumbler serves as an excellent planchette. Be sure the size of the planchette is in proportion to the board or it will be challenging to receive and interpret messages.

Ideally, all your experiences are happy and uplifting, but if not, a temporary board is easily destroyed, similar to burning your bridges behind you. No further contact through that board will be possible.



July 2

Saints of the Day

DENMARK VESEY

Following a century of veneration, in the twenty-first century, Denmark Vesey has emerged as a full-blown folk saint, especially among Hoodoo practitioners. A skilled carpenter and linguist, Vesey, a Black man, was born enslaved in St. Thomas. Bought and sold, Vesey ended up in South Carolina, where he was able to purchase his freedom. However, unable to also purchase the freedom of his wife and children, he stayed in Charleston, where he opened a carpentry shop and became closely associated with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Vesey's focus was on the *Book of Exodus* and its account of the Jews' liberation from slavery. A literate man, he read aloud from it to crowds of the illiterate, drawing explicit parallels to their own situation.

Vesey became the leader of what would potentially have been the largest slave rebellion in the US, had it not been exposed. (Those who provided information likely did so under duress.) The rebellion was scheduled to take place on Bastille Day (July 14) in 1822, but Vesey, along with 130 compatriots, was arrested on June 18. Tried and convicted, he was executed by hanging on July 2, 1822. Denmark Vesey is invoked for liberation and for help with finances and education. Offer him candles and carpentry tools. Sometimes he is venerated alongside Gullah Jack (please see [July 12](#) for details).

SAINT THOMAS

Thomas is among those saints who behave more magically than a respectable Christian saint should. Tomorrow is the feast of Saint Thomas, so tonight is his eve. It's considered one of the most magically powerful nights of the year, suitable for any kind of divination or spellcasting. Please see [July 3](#) for details of

the saint. This love divination spell is specifically associated with the saint and should be cast either tonight or on December 20, the eve of his second annual feast.

True Love Thomas Onion Spell

1. Peel an onion while invoking Saint Thomas and requesting his assistance and blessings. Tears triggered by the onion will empower your spell.
2. Wrap the peeled onion in your handkerchief or another specially designated cloth.
3. Sleep with this under your pillow tonight.
4. Before you go to sleep, chant the following:

*Good St. Thomas, do me right,
Let me see my true love this night,
Let me see that special face,
And feel love's warm embrace.*

5. Your true love should appear in your dreams.

July 3

The Dog Days

The term “Dog Days” refers to an extended period of hot, still summer weather in the northern hemisphere. It’s an ancient term, and these days are traditionally considered potentially dangerous, although how you fare likely depends on your feelings toward heat. Those who love the intensity of the summer sun will thrive, while those who long for cooler weather may find themselves agitated and unhappy.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their ancient origin, the time frame of the Dog Days is imprecise and varies depending on location and era. They may last anywhere from thirty to sixty-one days, beginning in July. Today, July 3, is traditionally considered the first of the Dog Days, but that’s not astronomically precise, and other dates are also given. “Dog Days” refers to the star Sirius (Sothis to the ancient Egyptians), popularly known as the Dog Star and interpreted as the hound that trails Orion the hunter. “Sirius” is interpreted as

meaning “scorcher,” referring to both the weather and the star. After a period of absence, Sirius rises in the sky during the summer, but not necessarily tonight and possibly not until August. For the ancient Egyptians, the appearance of the Dog Star signaled the annual Nile floods. The Egyptians identified Sothis (Sirius) as a goddess, who was eventually associated with Isis and the Stella Maris. The time period is also associated with the primordial goddess Hathor, and a festival of appeasement for her was held around this time. See [August 29](#) for details of Hathor.



Saints and Spirits of the Day

ANUBIS

Who is the dog of the Dog Days? It might be Anubis, ancient Egyptian spirit of death and the afterlife. Although typically described as a “jackal god” (and he may be), Anubis doesn’t resemble actual jackals. Instead, he looks like a sight hound, specifically pointy-eared Pharaoh Hounds, believed to descend from ancient Egyptian hunting hounds brought to Malta by Phoenicians.

For the ancient Egyptians, “the Western land” signified death and the afterlife. Anubis is known as the foremost of the Westerners. Credited with inventing mummification and embalming, Anubis is the most active deity in the Egyptian afterlife process, presiding over rituals for body and soul. The adopted son of the goddess Isis, he is her constant companion. (Her twin sister Nephthys is his birth mother.) Anubis traveled to Rome with Isis, from whence his popularity spread through Europe. (Details of Isis are found on [March 5](#) and of Nephthys on [August 28](#).)

Anubis is the patron deity of those in the funeral industry, as well as mediums and necromancers. He guards the dead, protecting against desecration, tomb raiders, and careless funerary services. Anubis is also a guardian of children—place his image where they sleep, as a request for protection. He is invoked to find lost articles. Touch the ears on his image and request his help.

Images of Anubis are readily available in different sizes and prices. Offer him water, candles, or incense, as well as donations on behalf of jackals or Pharaoh Hound Rescue.

SAINT THOMAS

Doubting Thomas was the apostle who doubted the validity of the resurrected Jesus, hence his nickname. The apparition of Jesus invited him to touch his wounds as proof. Thomas is often portrayed sticking his finger into Jesus' crucifixion wounds. (The finger used to poke the wounds is allegedly housed as a relic in Rome's *Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*.)

Credited as the author of several Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi, Thomas is among the most magical saints. He has several feasts, and their eves are considered especially auspicious for magic (see [December 21](#)).

Saint Thomas is envisioned riding a lion, accompanied by hounds. He is the patron saint of architects, builders, masons, and stonecutters, as well as the blind and visually impaired. Invoked to heal eye disorders, he is a vigilant guardian against malevolent magic and angry witchcraft. Those who spend a lot of time with angry magical practitioners might do well to seek his aid. Light candles for him.

July 4

Old Midsummer's Eve

Prior to calendar reforms, tonight was celebrated as Midsummer's Eve, a spectacularly magical night. Those who prefer to retain Julian calendar dates for spiritual events may celebrate tonight, as well as those whose experiences on June 23 were unsatisfying or who seek additional opportunities for revelry. Tonight is a witching night. Please see [June 23](#) for details.

Bath of the Seven Seas

This spell is my own, created for a friend after an encounter she had at the Coney Island Boardwalk in New York City on a Fourth of July. A passing fortune-teller murmured to her that she was under a curse that would never be broken unless she took "the Bath of the Seven Seas." And then the fortune-teller kept walking and disappeared into the crowd. My friend was shaken up. My friend called me frantically, asking about a bath, and so I created one based on the ancient *Seven Waves Cleansing Spell* featured on July 5. This is now my own favorite cleansing spell. Today is an excellent time to prepare it, obtain the

ingredients, or cast it.

Ingredients

7 different types of salt, each from a different sea. For example, Breton *fleur de sel*, Dead Sea salt, Hawaiian *alaea* salt, Himalayan salt, and so forth.

Essential oils derived from marine plants. For example, *Pinus pinaster*, the maritime pine, rosemary, and rock rose.

1. Blend the ingredients together, beginning with the salt and adding the essential oils last.
2. The ingredients themselves provide powerful cleansing and hex-breaking effects, so it's enough to add to a bath or incorporate into a salt scrub by adding sunflower oil until the desired consistency is obtained.
3. However, I find that incorporating ritual further empowers the formula:
 - Murmur your goals, intentions, and desires over the salt, always speaking in the present tense, for example, “All curses on me are broken.”
 - Dedicate the bath salts to a spirit associated with the sea (Yemaya, Ogum Beira Mar, Medusa, or Aphrodite, for example), the moon (Artemis or Hekate, for instance), or with salt (Berchta or Lot's wife) and request their blessings.
 - Hold the bowl containing the blend while visualizing yourself accomplishing the *Seven Waves Cleansing Spell*. (See [July 5](#).)
 - Any or all of the above.
4. If your situation is dire or frightens you, accompany the bath with prayers and affirmations. (“I am safe, I am healthy, I am curse-free” and so forth.)
5. After the bath, dry yourself with a new towel and put on fresh, clean clothes.

Spirit of the Day

LORD AGWÉ

Lord Agwé, Haitian Vodou's King of the Sea, rules over everything that lives within the ocean, as well whatever is in or on it: from shipwrecks at the bottom,

to cruise ships riding the waves, to *you* if you've gone for a swim. Invoke him for protection and safety. A spirit of victory and prosperity, he is also a psychopomp: a spirit who leads dead souls to the afterlife, which, in Vodou cosmology, lies beneath the sea. A military spirit, he is a stickler for proper procedure, thus it's best to address him politely and never to be too informal. His ranks include admiral and commander. Anything that harms or pollutes the sea angers him.

Lord Agwé is identified with Saint Ulrich, who is portrayed holding a fish. Today is Ulrich's feast and, hence, also Lord Agwé's. Images of Ulrich or Archangel Raphael, who also holds a fish, may be used to represent him; however, numerous Haitian portraits exist. The King of Cups tarot card may be used to represent him.

As befitting his station, he expects only the finest offerings. He drinks champagne and rum, as well as fine coffee, prepared with sugar and cream. He likes objects with a naval or marine motif. Formal rituals honoring Lord Agwé are unique, as they actually take place at sea, and are among the most beautiful, elaborate, and lavish Haitian Vodou ceremonies.



July 5

Old Midsummer's Day

Prior to calendar reforms, today was celebrated as Midsummer's Day. Those who prefer to retain the Julian calendar for spiritual use may celebrate today instead of June 24. Alternatively, those with unsatisfying experiences on the 24th, those unable to celebrate on that earlier date, or those seeking further revelry may consider today a second chance. Please see [June 24](#) for further information.

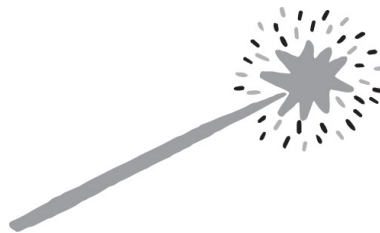
Seven Waves Cleansing Spell

The power of the salty sea is believed so immense that contact with it provides spiritual and magical cleansing including the breaking of hexes and curses, even

those that are old and entrenched. An ancient spell found all over the Mediterranean enables you to break your own curses—and maybe even have some fun in the process.

1. Stand in the water, as deep or shallow as is comfortable for you, and allow seven waves to hit you. More than seven is fine, but not less. Small waves are sufficient.
2. That's the whole spell, but it's not quite as simple as it sounds. Waves can't be controlled. They come in different sizes and from different directions. Even if you are in their path, some may fail to make direct contact with you, as is required. And take it from me: it's easy to lose track of the count. (In that case, begin again from number 1.)

In parts of the Mediterranean, the required number of waves is nine rather than seven, perhaps because in these regions nine is the ultimate magical number. “Nine Waves” lacks the resonance of “Seven Waves,” so evocative of the seven seas, seven stars, and seven visible planets, and so I have titled this spell after the smaller number, but if you prefer nine—or even another magical number, providing it's greater than seven—please adjust to suit your own taste.



Supersonic Seven Waves Cleansing Spell

What if yours is not a standard case? What if you fear a centuries-old family curse or something genuinely life-threatening? An ancient variation on the Seven Waves Cleansing Spell can allegedly break *any* curse, but it is time consuming and expensive.

1. Travel to seven different seas, allowing seven waves to hit you at each one. Once this intensive journey is complete, any malevolent energy clinging to you or blocking your path to happiness will allegedly be removed.
2. Take a circuitous journey home, rather than traveling in a straight line

(connecting flights, layovers, rest stops, for example).

July 6

Saint of the Day

SAINT GODELIEVE

Godelieve is a canonized saint, albeit a victim of femicide rather than a religious martyr. Today is her feast. The matron saint of brides and those requiring restraining orders or seeking shelter, she is invoked against evil in-laws and abuse of all kinds, as well as against eye and throat disorders. Visit the Holy Well of Saint Godelieve in Gistel, Belgium. Offer her candles, incense, a glass of Saint Godelieve Belgian liqueur, or donations on behalf of the abused.

July 7

Seven is considered to be among the most magical numbers, and so today—the seventh day of the seventh month—is an amazing opportunity for any type of magical working.

World Chocolate Day

Today is World Chocolate Day around the globe. The most popular way of celebrating is, of course, the obvious: eating chocolate. But chocolate is also *magical*. The Latin name, *Theobroma cacao*, means “food of the gods,” indicating its power. Indigenous to Mexico, the Aztecs primarily consumed chocolate in the form of an unsweetened ritual drink, also incorporating chile peppers. The conquistadors sent it to Europe, where sugar and milk were eventually added, and where chocolate’s aphrodisiac properties were emphasized. A box of chocolate is a typical modern courting or anniversary gift. Back in the days of the Spanish Inquisition, however, records indicate that women were accused of serving hot chocolate love potions. Luckily for us, that’s no longer illegal.

CHOCOLATE ROMANCE POTION

1. Create your favorite hot chocolate or, maybe more important, your intended's favorite hot chocolate.
2. Add a small splash of Damiana liqueur. Damiana (*Turnera diffusa*) is a Mexican herb touted for its aphrodisiac properties.
3. Sprinkle with powdered cinnamon.
4. Whisper words of love over the potion and serve.

Please note, it's crucial that this potion tastes good, looks appealing, and that the thought of consuming it makes the object of your desire happy. Customize to taste. Omit any parts that are problematic and substitute as desired. The only required ingredient is the chocolate.

Spirits of the Day

APOLLO

Apollo, a blindingly beautiful and extremely complex spirit, is most familiar as the Olympian pantheon's golden boy, son of Zeus and twin brother of Artemis. A master healer, Apollo sends *and* removes plagues and epidemics of all kinds. He is also an oracular spirit, capable of bestowing enhanced psychic skills. In the famous story of Cassandra, he simultaneously gifted her with powers of impeccable prophesy and cursed her to never be believed. Apollo is the patron of healers, musicians, poets, philosophers, mediums, psychics, diviners, those who protect wolves, and handsome men. His sacred animals include wolves, rats, mice, dolphins, ravens, crows, and swans.

Apollo's number is 7. Today, the seventh day of the seventh month, is his birthday, but the seventh day of each month is sacred to Apollo, as is the waxing half-moon. Incorporate the number 7 into his veneration: burn seven-day candles for him, for instance. Offer him wine, incense, and amber. He is a gregarious spirit, happy to share altar space, especially with his mother and sister. It is traditional to also celebrate Apollo's mother and twin sister during this period. Greek myth identifies them as Leto and Artemis; the Romans called them Latona and Diana. Please see [June 6](#) for more information about Artemis and [August 13](#) for more about Diana. In Greece and Rome, Leto/Latona was venerated alongside her children. Statues of Artemis or Diana are easy to find. Leto/Latona may be represented by the image of a wolf.

JUNO CAPROTINA

Today is the feast of Juno Caprotina or Juno of the Wild Fig. On this day, the goddess Juno is honored as the matron deity of women who serve—originally this meant servants, but modern caregivers, food servers, and those in service professions can claim her as their goddess, too. It's a good day to enjoy figs, plant a fig tree, or celebrate them. Water may be offered to the tree and its spirits as a libation. Juno was traditionally offered the milky sap from fig trees; however, flowers, especially roses and irises, may be easier to provide. Enjoy some *mahia*, the Moroccan fig liqueur, and share some with Juno, too.

THE WEAVING MAIDEN

The Weaving Maiden, also known as the Spider Princess, is either the youngest or oldest of the Pleiades, seven beautiful star sisters. According to an ancient Chinese myth, the Seven Sisters descended to Earth to spend an afternoon enjoying hot springs, where they were observed by a cowherd. Entranced, he picked up an item of discarded clothing. As sunset approached, six sisters flew home, but—in shades of *Swan Lake*—the Weaving Maiden, unable to find her garment, was trapped on Earth.

The cowherd, known as Ox Boy, approached her, revealing that he had taken her clothes. Although initially sad, Weaving Maiden soon fell deeply in love with Ox Boy. They lived together for seven happy years, and the Weaving Maiden gave birth to two children. Suddenly, after seven years, the Jade Emperor, ruler of the Chinese pantheon and the Weaving Maiden's father, decided that she must return home immediately: a match between the divine and mortal worlds—the celestial and the mundane—was forbidden. And so, despite her protests, the Weaving Maiden was transported home, away from her beloved and her children. The Weaving Maiden wept so bitterly that finally her father relented: the lovers reunite for one night annually, on the seventh day of the seventh month, when magpies form a bridge across the Milky Way.

The Weaving Maiden is a romantic heroine, who is especially sympathetic to lovers, particularly those who are star-crossed. Her number is 7. Her creature is the spider. (If you seek her blessings, expect to see spiders. Do not harm them.) She appears in the sky as Vega, the brightest star in the constellation Lyra, across the Milky Way from the star Altair—the form now taken by Ox Boy.

Their reunion is celebrated as the Feast of the Double Seventh or the *Qixi Festival*, held annually on the *seventh day of the seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar*. Although she may be invoked anytime, this day is perceived as the ideal time to request the Weaving Maiden's blessings and favors. A similar

festival is held in Japan, but that one is now timed to the Western calendar and is held today, *the seventh day of the seventh month of the Western calendar*. Known as *Tanabata* or the Evening of the Seventh, this is Japan's Star Festival, deriving from that Chinese festival. Tanabata celebrates the annual meeting of the lovers Orihime and Hikoboshi, as they are known in Japan—the Weaving Maiden and Ox Boy, respectively. It is a night for romantic spells, as well as rituals to improve one's love life, if so desired.

July 8

Prosperity Candle Spell

This spell is for general prosperity rather than a specific sum or quick infusion of cash. However, it may be tailored to your own specific needs. The spell has an herbal component in addition to the candle. Throughout the entire preparation process, visualize yourself happy, prosperous, and confident. See yourself living the life you desire.

1. Grind any seven of the following in a mortar and pestle: allspice, cinnamon, cloves, fennel seeds, lime zest, myrrh, orange zest, orris root, parsley, patchouli, vetiver.
2. A green or gold candle is required, symbolizing money. If you like, the spell may be enhanced by carving your name, lucky financial sigils, and other symbols into the wax, and then rubbing with money-drawing oils, but this isn't necessary.
3. Place the candle on a fire-safe surface and surround it with a circle of the herbal material.
4. Burn while focusing on prosperity.
5. If you have leftover herbal material, keep it in a prosperity-drawing charm bag, along with any auspicious-looking wax remnants from the candle.

Saint of the Day

ARNOLD OF SOISSONS

Celebrate with a beer today, as it's the feast of Saint Arnold, patron saint of beer, brewers, anyone involved in beer production, bartenders, as well as connoisseurs of the beverage. If you count yourself among these, raise a glass to your patron saint and request his aid and protection. Considered a miracle healer, Saint Arnold is also associated with bees. While weaving bee skeps for the abbey's apiary, he realized that they could serve as beer filters, too. Bee skeps are now his sacred symbol; his creatures are bees and wolves; and his plant is—what else?—hops.

July 9

Mermaid Love-Drawing Charm Bag

Mermaids are associated with all sorts of magic: divination, necromancy, prosperity, psychic power, creativity, but especially love spells. (Please see [March 29](#) for more about mermaids.) Unlike the sad fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen “The Little Mermaid,” these beautiful denizens of the deep are widely considered masters of love and romance. This charm bag draws on powerful essence of mermaid to draw true love toward you or—if you're already in possession—to keep it safe and sound.

1. Add the following to a charm bag (ideally one crafted from blue or green silk): seven water lily seeds, one quartz crystal or moonstone, one seashell, and a silver charm in the form of a mermaid.
2. Hold the open bag in your hands while visualizing your desires fulfilled.
3. Spit (a little) in the bag and tie it shut.
4. If and when you feel the bag needs to be recharged, open it, leave it exposed to moonlight, and then repeat steps 2 and 3.



July 10

Mirror Divination

This is a scrying, intuitive kind of divination, akin to gazing into a crystal ball. Because of the setup—the way one is positioned between two mirrors—it's ideal for solo divination, although two people could position themselves across from each other and compare notes later. The spell requires two standing mirrors and four candles and is ideally cast in a darkened room.

1. Determine what it is that you wish to know. Articulate your query concisely and hold it in your mind.
2. Place two mirrors, as identical in size and shape as possible, across from each other on a table.
3. Place two lit candles on either side of each mirror (for a total of four candles). The candles should also be as identical to each other as possible, although once they begin burning, this is no longer under your control.
4. Sit between the mirrors and gaze within them. If they are positioned correctly, they will reflect each other. Relax, be patient, and keep your mind clear. You may see images in the mirror(s) or they may appear unbidden in your mind.

July 11

Today may be written 7/11, a number combination widely perceived as lucky, especially by gamblers, and by extension situations that involve risk taking, and magic spells for luck, prosperity, and love. This is a day for positive spellcasting—spells to create happy scenarios.

7:11 Short Candle Spell

Prepare your candle in advance so that you are ready to light it at exactly 7:11. If possible, 7:11 AM is preferable: eleven minutes past the seventh hour of the day. However, a clock shows 7:11 twice a day, so 7:11 PM works, too. Select a candle

in a color representing your goal: red for love, for example, or green for cash. You may embellish the candle as you choose—carving lucky sigils into the wax or rubbing with lucky oils such as Van-Van or Lucky Lodestone, but timing is the crucial component of this spell. Hold the candle in your hand and visualize your goals achieved, and then at precisely 7:11 light the candle and let it burn out completely without putting out the flame. Never leave candles burning unattended: consider a small candle that will burn out in a few hours. If really pressed for time, a birthday candle will do.

7:11 Long Candle Spell

This candle spell, unlike the one above, is intended to be cast over a number of days. It may be cast for a specific purpose or simply to improve your luck.

1. Choose a candle that represents your goal. If your goal is to improve your luck, consider a candle crafted in a lucky shape, such as a black cat or a red witch, obtainable through sellers of spiritual supplies.
2. Scratch your name, affirmations, and “7/11” into the wax.
3. If you like, rub the candle with lucky oil. Use your favorite or try Black Cat Oil—the formula is found in this book in the entry for [January 17](#).
4. Hold the candle in your hands and visualize your goals accomplished.
5. At 7:11, either morning or evening, light the candle.
6. Keep your eye on the clock or set a timer: allow the candle to burn for seven minutes before snuffing it out.
7. Tomorrow, at 7:11, once again visualize your goal accomplished and light the candle again, snuffing it out after eleven minutes.
8. Repeat this on consecutive days until the candle burns out or can no longer be relit. (So seven minutes the third day, eleven minutes the fourth, and so on). At least the beginnings of success should be apparent by spell’s end. If not, seek stronger action, preceded by cleansing or unblocking spells.



July 12

Magic Power Recharging Earth Altar

Small, humble, natural objects can help generate, maintain, and enhance your own magical powers. This is effectively an altar, but there's no need to dedicate it to any particular deity, unless desired. Instead, its focus is on Earth's natural powers. It may be maintained as a tableau on a flat surface or, especially if privacy is an issue, it may be kept within a lidded box (like an old cigar box) and opened as needed. Your altar can be as large or as small as you desire.

This magical exercise is a work in progress; add to it or remove objects as desired. Because the items are not gifts to a deity, the items remain "yours"—feel free to disperse them as desired. Although some items may be purchased (crystals, for example), the effect is more potent if incorporating found items.

Collect small objects, especially those associated with elements. Here are some examples: stones and shells, especially those with naturally occurring holes; small vials of sand, dirt, and water, especially from sacred places; found feathers; found snake skins; found animal bones; dried beans, herbs, and grains; bones saved from meals you've eaten (chicken, lamb, fish, and so forth); dried fish scales; found claws, thorns, or teeth.

Because you are seeking the blessings of Earth, the elements, and elementals, and perhaps other spirits, it's crucial that nothing be included that you have obtained through violence or whose taking has created disharmony. These are gifts of Earth and sea. To use your altar, play with it like a child. Access your inner magic and allow it to express itself.

Saint of the Day

GULLAH JACK

On this day in 1822, Gullah Jack was executed by hanging in South Carolina. Now venerated as a folk saint, often alongside his compatriot Denmark Vesey, today is his feast. Among the planners and leaders of a planned 1822 slave revolt in Charleston, little is known of Gullah Jack's early life. Born in Angola, he was sold as a slave in 1806 and shipped to America from the port in Zanzibar. Slave master Zephaniah Kingsley described Gullah Jack as "a priest in his own country" and stated that he always kept a small conjure bag with him.

In Charleston, Jack met Vesey, who, although previously enslaved, had managed to purchase his freedom. Partners in the planned revolt, each man provided different skills. Vesey was an educated, literate multilingualist; Jack was a respected herbalist and Conjure man who provided protective talismans to participants in the rebellion. Known locally as "the little man who can't be killed," his talismans were prized.

Gullah Jack prescribed a diet for the freedom fighters, recommending that nothing be consumed but parched corn meal and a peanut butter-like mash. He also distributed crab claws, telling rebels to keep them near their mouths when the insurrection began. Crabs are silent yet aggressive creatures—their claws are their weapons. They are also symbolic of the astrological sign Cancer—the date of the planned rebellion, July 14, chosen to coincide with Bastille Day, falls under this sign. Ultimately, some nine thousand people enlisted in the revolt. Eventually word leaked, authorities tortured individuals into providing details, and 130 people were arrested. Thirty-six were executed by hanging, including Denmark Vesey and Gullah Jack. He is invoked for courage, protection, enhanced esoteric knowledge, and liberation. See [July 2](#) for more information about Denmark Vesey.

July 13

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Trinka Five!

This tried and true, mysterious, but very popular old spell is widely believed to be of Romanichal origin. Numerous variations exist—what follows is the simplest, bare-bones version. It's typically a fast-cash spell, used whenever a quick infusion is needed; however, some rely on it as their only spell and adapt it to draw whatever is needed. Simply repeat the following chant:

Trinka Five! Trinka Five!
Ancient spirits come alive!
Bring me money. Bring it quick.
Spirits of the Trinka Five!

Results should be apparent soon or not at all. Many believe chanting the spell is sufficient. Others recommend rolling coins in your pocket simultaneously or tossing one or more coins into a can or other container as you chant. If tossing the coins, save them, don't spend, lose, or give them away, especially if the spell works for you.

Mary Magdalene's feast is on July 22. Some identify Sarah as Mary's daughter, and for those people, especially those seeking their blessings of fertility, they can begin a candle or prayer vigil today culminating on July 22.

Saint of the Day

SARA LA KALI OR SAINT SARAH

The identity of this mysterious folk saint is subject to speculation and controversy: Sara may be the Egyptian servant who traveled to France on the boat with the Marys of the Sea. She may be a local priestess of Ishtar who greeted the boat when it landed in France. She may be a Romani priestess who greeted the boat, a precursor of later Romani migrations. Her presence may mask continued veneration of Isis, once among the primary goddesses of this region. She may be an avatar of the goddess Kali who traveled with the Romani on their circuitous journey from India. Or she may be the secret daughter of Mary Magdalene and Jesus.

Her names are used somewhat interchangeably: “Saint Sarah” emphasizes biblical origins; “Sara la Kali” means “Sara the Black” and emphasizes her relationship with the Romani, for centuries her primary constituency. For years, *only* the Romani were permitted to venerate her. Sara is not canonized, but she is venerated alongside canonized saints, such as the Marys of the Sea. It is unclear when Romani devotions began, but major pilgrimages to the town of Les-Maries-de-la-Mer apparently began in the fifteenth century, similar to Romani migrations in Western Europe.

Saint Sarah’s primary image and the manner in which she is venerated resembles a Black Madonna: she is represented by a carved dark wood statue. Reproductions exist, but black chess queens are also used to represent her. Saint Sarah is invoked for all sorts of blessings, but her specialties are fertility and healing. She also presides over justice and the revelation of mysteries.

July 14

French Cleansing Spell

As today is Bastille day, let’s cast a French spell. Originally a fumigation intended to rid an area of germs, as well as evil spirits (and some might consider them one and the same), back in the day it would have been cast by burning actual botanical material. Those celebrating Bastille Day with bonfires may still do so. Alternatively, the botanicals may be burned in an iron cauldron. However, in the interest of space and safety, essential oils are easily substituted. Essential oils—extracted from aromatic plants, typically by distillation—are the basis of aromatherapy. Modern aromatherapy was born in France, and so this is very much in keeping with the spirit of the day.

Ingredients

Essential oil of juniper

Essential oil of lavender (ideally French lavender)

Essential oil of rosemary

1. Add these ingredients to an aromatherapy diffuser so that the scent permeates an area. (Follow directions of your particular diffuser; typically, the essential oils are added to water.)

2. Alternatively, add several drops of each essential oil to a spray bottle filled with vodka or Everclear. (Consider Grey Goose French vodka.) Spray as desired; this method may allow you to better target specific areas.
3. Less is more when it comes to essential oils—it's unnecessary to use more than a few drops of each oil. Adjust so that the fragrance is appealing.

The Saut-d'Eau Pilgrimage

Today marks the first day of the annual three-day pilgrimage to the sacred waterfalls of Saut-d'Eau in Haiti. On this day in 1849, a young man experienced a vision of the lwa Ezili Dantor standing beside a palm tree. (Please see [August 26](#) for more information about Dantor.) When she vanished, her image appeared on a leaf. When the leaf fell, the image transferred to another leaf. This attracted great attention, and people began to flock to the area. Soon, those who bathed in the waterfall were reporting that they experienced miraculous healings.

The response from local Catholic priests was to cut down the tree. After veneration transferred to another tree, priests cut that one down, too. Eventually an attempt was made to transfer focus to Our Lady of Carmel, with whom Ezili is syncretized and whose feast day is held on July 16, the culmination of this three-day pilgrimage. The Vatican, however, has so far declined to accept the Haitian apparition as an official Marian apparition in the manner of Knock, Lourdes, or Medjugorje. That said, devotees of Carmel attend the pilgrimage, as well as Vodouisantes and those seeking their own healing miracles. The waterfall is also sacred to Damballah and Aïdo-Hwedo. (Please see [March 17](#) for more information.) Those unable to attend the pilgrimage may still honor and invoke the spirits associated with it at home or where possible.

July 15

Feast of All Apostles

“Apostle” derives from a Greek word meaning “a person sent.” In Christian context, an apostle might theoretically be *any* missionary. However, when the reference is to *the* Apostles, this specifically refers to the original apostles of Christ. They are also sometimes called “The Twelve.” The list of their names

varies slightly depending on which Gospel is consulted. The following list is from the Gospel of Matthew: Simon Peter, Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Judas Thaddeus (Saint Jude), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. Although each Apostle (except for Judas Iscariot) has his own feast day, today is their shared feast.

APOSTLES COURT CASE SPELLS

As there are twelve Apostles, they are perceived as resembling a twelve-person jury, and so the Apostles are a popular component of American court case spells. John George Hohman's *Book of Pow-Wows: The Long Lost Friend*, a compendium of Pow-Wow spells first published in 1820, recommends writing the names of the Apostles on sage leaves, which should be placed inside your shoes when attending court, so that they can uplift you and increase the likelihood of victory. (Pow-Wow is a system of magic incorporating German, Romani, and Native American traditions.)

Of course, if one really considers the Apostles as akin to a jury, then consensus is unlikely. At least in conventional retellings, Judas Iscariot followed his own independent path. But sometimes consensus is not what's desired. The Apostles are invoked in a spell to produce a hung or split jury. Although this spell may be cast anytime, if you anticipate that you will need it, you can prepare the name papers in advance today for some extra power.

General metaphysical wisdom suggests that requesting allied groups of spirits to work together for you will enhance their power and thus your success. Other examples are Japan's Seven Spirits of Good Fortune, Santeria's Seven African Powers, China's Eight Immortals, as well as the Fourteen Holy Helpers, heroes of Catholic folk magic.

1. Write the names of eleven Apostles—all except Judas Iscariot—on a piece of paper, arranging them in two columns: six on one side, five on the other.
2. Fold up this paper and place it inside your right shoe.
3. Write "Judas Iscariot" on another piece of paper. Fold it up and place it

inside your left shoe.

4. Keep these inside your shoes until the case is resolved to help produce a jury that can't agree.

July 16

Saints of the Day

OUR LADY OF CARMEL

This aspect of Mary the Blessed Mother first gained prominence during the Crusader Era, when monks dwelling in caves on Mount Carmel, perceiving themselves in chivalric terms, dedicated themselves to Mary as the Lady of the Mountain. Evidence indicates that Mount Carmel, located near Haifa, Israel, has been considered a sacred place since at least the fifteenth century BCE. According to Roman historian Tacitus, there was once an oracle there, consulted by Emperor Vespasian.

Our Lady of Carmel rose to prominence in response to a visionary experience reported by Simon Stock, an English Carmelite, now a saint. On July 16, 1251, Stock received a vision in which Our Lady of Carmel offered him a brown scapular. Originally a monastic ritual garment similar to an apron, smaller devotional or talismanic scapulars evolved in response to this vision. According to Stock, those who faithfully wore the talismanic Carmelite brown scapular were promised salvation. It is also now used for magical purposes, although many would describe this as sacrilegious.

Our Lady of Carmel is sometimes considered a Black Madonna and sometimes associated with the Stella Maris. Her image is also used to represent other female saints and spirits, for example Vodou lwa Ezili Dantor and Argentinian folk saint Difunta Correa. Because of the synchronicity of the first successful explosion of the atom bomb on her feast day, Our Lady of Carmel is now deeply associated with the physical, psychic, and spiritual dangers of the nuclear era. She is invoked for peace, protection, and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

CARMELITE WATER

This magical formula water is named for the French Carmelite Sisters who first

concocted it in 1379 for King Charles V. The key ingredient of Carmelite Water is the herb melissa, also known as lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*). The other ingredients may be omitted or adapted, but without melissa this ceases to be Carmelite Water. Although called a “water,” Carmelite Water is typically made with an alcohol base. Those who eschew alcohol can make an infusion of the chopped herbs and drink it as tea instead, although it must be made fresh this way, as alcohol serves as a preservative.

As its folk name suggests, melissa tastes deliciously lemony. If you find yourself using this potion on a regular basis, it may be simpler and more economical to grow your own melissa, whether in pots or a garden. It grows easily, and bees and butterflies will flock to it. It may be concocted at any time, but today’s batch, created in synchronicity with the feast of Our Lady of Carmel, will be especially blessed and empowered. Variations on the recipe exist: this is a basic one.

Ingredients

½ cup chopped melissa leaves

¼ cup chopped angelica root, *Angelica sinensis*, also known as dong quai

The juice of 1 small lemon

1 tablespoon crushed coriander seeds

1 teaspoon crushed cloves

1 whole nutmeg

1 cinnamon stick

1. Place the ingredients in a quart jar.
2. Add enough vodka or dry white wine to fill the jar.
3. Stir the ingredients gently, then cover the jar tightly and let it sit in a cool area, away from direct sunlight.
4. Leave this to rest for seven days, shaking the jar gently once a day. (But if you’re impatient, at least let it sit overnight before sampling.)
5. Carefully strain out the herbs and spices.

Carmelite Water was originally intended to be consumed as a health-reviving panacea and an elixir of longevity. If taking internally, make sure all ingredients are safe for consumption. It may also be used similarly to Holy Water for

spiritual cleansing, hex breaking, and protection. If added to bathwater, it allegedly stimulates happy dreams and counteracts nightmares. Added to a compress, it reputedly soothes migraines and other headaches.

July 17

Emoji Spells

Small pictures or ideograms representing emotions, concepts, and objects, emojis were first used in Japan in 1997 and have since become such an intrinsic part of international modern culture and communication that a day has been designated to celebrate them. Anything may be used to cast spells, and emojis are no exception. Today is World Emoji Day and a great time to experiment.

Emoji spells are cast with emojis—they are the ingredients of these spells. For an emoji spell to work, it must be sent, even if only to yourself. Some emojis are overtly mystical, such as the crystal ball, Evil Eye bead, and lucky clovers. However, a vast variety of emojis exist with more being constantly developed, so you have a great and diverse selection to work with.

Emoji spells can be cast openly or secretly. The simplest and often most discreet method is to identify the emoji that most closely represents the goal of your spell. For example, the money bag emoji may be used in a quick cash spell or one of the planes or boats used to magic up a needed vacation. Depending on your personal goal, a single emoji may be sufficient, but emoji spells typically incorporate multiple emojis, often an entire string of them. However, as with any other spell, remember: nothing should be random. Each component of a spell should be chosen thoughtfully. Here are a few options:

- The crystal ball emoji is frequently used to frame a spell, making it the first and last of a string of emojis, as a way of demarcating magical space.
- Those who consistently cast circles before spellcasting may choose a circle emoji to frame the spell instead.
- If you are traveling and unable to make your usual spiritual offerings, do it with emojis. Send a cup of coffee emoji to Baron Samedi and a glass of red wine emoji to Madame Brigitte, at least as a placeholder until you're able to deliver the real thing. Text them to your own number or to a fellow devotee.

Saint of the Day

SAINT ALEXIUS

Today is the feast of Saint Alexius. He is invoked to protect you from all harm and to keep enemies far away. However, he is most famous for a banishing spell, which evokes his aid. In return, Alexius wants nothing more from you than your own righteous, ethical, kind behavior. Celebrate him by doing good deeds and giving generously to the poor and needy. (That said, candles are traditionally lit in his honor.) Alexius is the patron saint of beggars, wanderers, spiritual travelers, pilgrims, the homeless, gatekeepers, and nurses.

San Alejo Banishing Spell

The Spanish variant of Alexius is *Alejo*, pronounced *A-lay-ho*. The name resembles the Spanish verb *alejar*, meaning “to remove,” “to withdraw,” “to push farther away,” or, in magical parlance, “to banish.” San Alejo is the focal point of the kindest of all banishing spells. This spell is for guests who have overstayed their welcome: you love them, but it’s time for them to go. If the spell works, the person will suddenly have a good incentive to leave—they may be offered a job or an offer of someplace more comfortable to stay. The spouse who threw them out may welcome them back. Nothing bad will happen to your unwanted guest. (If the spell doesn’t work, nothing will happen at all and you’ll have to come up with other methods of dislodging them.) The spell may be cast at any time, as needed, but today San Alejo is at the peak of his power.

1. Hold a candle in your hand while requesting San Alejo’s help. A silver candle is best but, if unavailable, a white or pink candle will do. Tell him precisely what you need and specifically who needs to leave.
2. Make a vow, specifying what you will do in honor of San Alejo should he fulfill your request. (Feel free to give him a deadline, for example: “*my relative must leave by such-and-such-a-date or our deal is off.*”) Charitable donations are ideal, especially on behalf of the homeless, or, alternatively, more or bigger candles.
3. Light your candle and chant the following seventeen times:

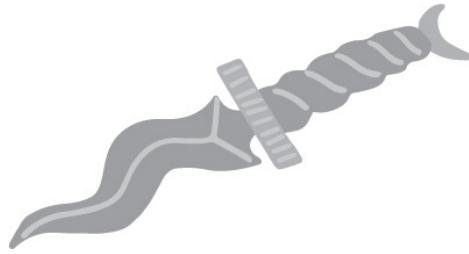
“San Alejo, Alejelo” (literally, “*Saint Alejo, away with it*”), pronounced *san-ah-lay-ho ah-lay-hay-lo*.
4. Remember to fulfill your vow promptly should San Alejo fulfill your request.

July 18

Fire Safety Talismans

On this day in 64 CE, the Great Fire of Rome began. It raged for six days, destroying much of the city and killing hundreds of people with thousands more left homeless. Fire's destructive power is among humanity's primordial fears and remains so, especially today, as increased wildfires are among the effects of climate change. Spells and talismans for fire safety should always be accompanied by practical measures; in other words, call the fire department first and take all safety precautions prior to complementing your efforts with magical methods. This list of magical fire safety recommendations is potentially beneficial for everyone but especially for practitioners of candle magic and pyromancy:

- Request spiritual help from Archangel Michael or Saint Florian, patrons of fire safety. (Please see [September 29](#) and [May 4](#), respectively.)
- An image of a small red rooster allegedly promotes fire safety. Keep it near your stove, hearth, or wherever candles are usually burned.
- Hang dried, naturally shed snakeskins from your roof to protect against fire. (It must be naturally shed, not violently taken. The spell relies upon the goodwill of the serpent spirit.)
- The presence of a well-fed, content tricolor cat in your home allegedly provides insurance against fire.
- Allergic to cats? Landlord won't let you have one? A tricolored maneki neko—the Japanese amulet in the shape of a beckoning cat—also promotes fire safety. (Tri-colored maneki nekos are standard; this is not a hard amulet to obtain.)
- Mistletoe, Saint John's wort, and pieces of larch wood kept within the home allegedly protect against dangerous fires.



July 19

The Lucaria

This Roman festival of groves was held over two nonconsecutive days: July 19 and July 21. The festival is ancient, and information about how it was originally celebrated is hazy. Modern people might choose to celebrate within a grove or near a favorite tree. It's believed that the Romans made offerings to spirits of wild nature, such as nymphs, at this time, to appease and placate them, especially for the felling of trees. Those complicit with the cutting of healthy trees may take this day as an opportunity to make amends or restore spiritual balance. (It's not necessary to have wielded the axe. Hiring the tree-cutters is sufficient. Even if the action was necessary, if residing spirits were not notified and warned, they may linger and bear grudges.)

Spirit of the Day

RHEA SILVIA

Rhea Silvia is the mother of Romulus and Remus and thus the grandmother of Rome. According to legend, she was a princess and a direct descendant of Aeneas, the Trojan hero who fled the fallen city, leading a group of refugees to their new home in Italy. When her father was overthrown by a rival, Rhea was forced to become a Vestal Virgin, which entailed thirty years of celibacy. By the time her service was complete, she would be too old to bear children and continue the royal lineage. Rhea mysteriously became pregnant and gave birth to twin sons. She claimed that Mars was their father but was not believed. Rhea was ordered imprisoned and the twins killed, but a servant took pity on the babies, rescuing them by setting them adrift in a small vessel on the Tiber River.

When they floated to shore, a she-wolf adopted and nursed them.

Although the myth presents Rhea Silvia as a mortal princess, her name suggests a woodland deity instead. (“Rhea” indicates royalty, while “silvia” derives from a word for forest or woodland. She is the Queen of the Forest.) As the descendant of Aeneas, she was also the descendant of his mother, the goddess Aphrodite. Today is her feast. Give her images of her babies together with their adoptive mother, the wolf, among Mars’ sacred creatures. Light incense for her and offer Italian wine. Invoke her blessings and protection for children, wolves, and wild nature.

July 20

International Chess Day

Celebrated annually since 1966, this date was chosen to coincide with the day the International Chess Federation was founded in 1924. Known as the “King’s Game,” chess is a strategic board game played with two sets of sixteen pieces. Sets are typically distinguished from each other by color, traditionally black and white, but chess sets, like Tarot cards, have evolved into an art form and numerous variations now exist. And like Tarot, which also began as a game, chess and its pieces have numerous magical uses.

Chess pieces are used to represent saints and spirits as votive imagery, particularly the king, queen, and knight. For example, Saint George is represented by the white knight, and Sara La Kali by the black queen. The black queen may also be used to represent goddesses like Athena, Lilith, Isis, or Nephthys. If unable to locate a specific Black Madonna statue, a black queen chess piece may be substituted. Chess pieces are also incorporated into magic spells. For example, the castle may be included in charm bags for seeking new homes or the knight in home protection spells.

Saints of the Day

ELIJAH

Possibly in order to bolster claims that he was a forerunner of Christ, in the fourth century the Church acknowledged the biblical Jewish prophet Elijah as a saint. Perhaps because he was not a conventional saint or even a Christian, the

acceptable face of Elijah became a cover for various banished Pagan deities, especially Helios the sun. Elijah's name in Greek—Saint Elias—even resembles “Helios.” Icons of Elijah depicting his ascent to Heaven in a fiery chariot resemble images of Helios in his chariot. Because Elijah is closely associated with vehicles, ranging from cars to planes, it's customary to spiritually cleanse and bless your own vehicles today. Any sort of cleansing is appropriate, but if you happen to have Thunder Day Water, it's highly appropriate. When you're done, tuck an image of Elijah in the chariot in your glove compartment or another safe, discreet space.

Thunder Day Water

This potion, although now associated with Elijah, most likely recalls Perun, the Slavic thunder deity, who is syncretized to the saint. It can *only* be created on two days of the year, coinciding with the Russian feasts of Elijah, known as the Thunder Days, today and July 30, and *only* if it's raining. Rain falling today is believed to possess tremendous magical, spiritual, and therapeutic power. Collect it in clean containers and decant into bottles. Unless used immediately in its entirety, it must be refrigerated. Thunder Day Water is believed to prevent illness, break hexes, and banish the Evil Eye.

MARGARET OF ANTIOCH

Also known as Saint Marina, Margaret of Antioch is one of the dragon saints—those saints whose legends feature these fierce reptiles. Two variations of Margaret's legend exist:

- According to the official legend, Satan appeared to Margaret, an early Christian, in the form of a dragon or a huge snake. It swallowed her whole but was forced to disgorge her because of the power of her righteous Christian faith.
- A subversive reading of the legend points out that dragons, serpents, and Margaret's other symbols, such as cauldrons, are emblematic of female reproductive power, “coincidentally” this saint's field of expertise. Margaret may be a Pagan goddess, possibly Aphrodite, attempting to fly under the radar in the guise of a Christian saint.

Just before she died, Margaret made some extravagant vows, publicly proclaiming that she would protect and bless anyone who called out to her during childbirth. She also promised that anyone who invoked her on their

deathbed would be saved from Hell. In addition, she vowed that anyone who dedicated a church to her or lit candles for her would receive their heart's desires. With promises like these, it's easy to see why Margaret became such a popular saint. Over 250 churches are dedicated to Margaret in England alone. Conversely, she has always been among the most controversial saints: her vows rely on the devotee's relationship with her specifically, rather than with Christ or the Church. She was widely perceived as attempting to bribe devotees.

Unlike images of Archangel Michael or Saint George, Margaret is not portrayed killing her dragon. Without knowledge of the legend, just looking at her image, the dragon appears to be her companion or pet. If one removes the cross from her votive imagery, Margaret is easily mistaken for a Pagan sea goddess. ("Margaret" means "pearl," the fruit of the oyster, a symbol of Aphrodite, female sexuality, and salaciousness.)

Margaret is the matron saint of fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. She is invoked to heal menstrual disorders, kidney ailments, and for safety during natural disasters, especially earthquakes and floods. A formidable opponent of demons and malicious spirits, she may be requested to banish them. Margaret can banish the monsters in your dreams and nightmares. The Mistress of Snakes, Margaret protects people and serpents from each other. She may be invoked to heal snake bites. Today is her feast day: light some candles for her and tell her your heart's desires.

PANCHO VILLA

A man of paradox and contradictions, General Francisco "Pancho" Villa was a military leader, revolutionary, and briefly the governor of Chihuahua, as well as an outlaw, bank robber, and polygamist, reported to have had as many as twenty-four wives. Many are shocked to learn that he is now considered a folk saint, but Pancho is reputedly an active and generous benefactor. Today, the anniversary of his 1923 assassination, is his feast.

Venerated by independent practitioners, as well as by practitioners of Brujeria, Curanderismo, and Espiritismo, he communicates via spirit mediums. Pancho's sympathies are with the poor and oppressed. Invoked for money, prosperity, victory, and courage, especially when the deck is stacked against you, he will help you conquer inner demons as well as external oppression. He is requested to assist border-crossers, especially into the US, but potentially anywhere. If he helps you cross a border, it's traditional to display his image in gratitude; this may be done as discreetly or as secretly as needed. No need to worry about where to obtain an image: a cultural icon, all sorts of images now

proliferate. Pancho Villa loathed pretension. Although he had excellent taste, he despised the overpriced or hyper-refined. Offer him cigars, liquor, and candles, but you will not impress him by spending more than necessary. Ideally, offer him something of excellent value obtained at a low or smart price. He may be venerated alongside his own name saint, Francis of Assisi.

July 21

Tomorrow is the feast of Mary Magdalene, among the most beloved of all saints, venerated even by those who otherwise have little interest in saints. It's followed in quick succession by a series of feasts dedicated to other significant saints (Christopher, James, Martha) and the spirits identified with them (Anubis, Heracles, Ogun, Lubana). Thus, today is an excellent time for preparation—to get shopping and crafting done.

Mary Magdalene's Eve

Tonight is closely associated with prophetic dreams and spells for romance. Any dream or love spell suited to your personal circumstances may be cast. You may spontaneously receive prophetic dreams. Various English folk magic rituals, however, attempt to stimulate the process. These oracle spells are intended to be cast but one night a year—tonight, the threshold between July 21 and July 22.

The first of these spells is traditionally cast alone. The second is traditionally cast in a group of three; however, adapt to your own situation. Allegedly, it's most effective if cast by three sisters, although whether these are biological sisters, coven sisters, sorority sisters, or any other kind of sister is up to you. Both rituals require silence and a stalk of fresh rosemary.

ENGLISH MARY MAGDALENE'S EVE DREAM ORACLE #1

1. Blend vinegar, water, and wine in a dish and place it beside your bed—atop a nightstand, for example.
2. Soak a fresh rosemary spear in the liquid.
3. Shake off the excess liquid and then place the rosemary between your breasts.

4. Go to sleep.
5. Record your dreams or any details of them immediately upon awakening. Only when this step is complete may you resume speech.

ENGLISH MARY MAGDALENE'S EVE DREAM ORACLE #2

1. Blend the following: gin, rum, vinegar, wine, and water. (How much of each? You decide. Should you sample the ingredients? Also, up to you. Should you pour a glass of wine or water for Mary Magdalene? Probably.)
2. Using a stalk of fresh rosemary as a tool, sprinkle the potion all around the room where you will sleep, including the corners, thresholds, and windowsills. Sprinkle it over the bed, sheets, and pillows. Sprinkle it over yourself, too. If multiple people are involved, sprinkle it over each other but be sure not to laugh. The entire spell beginning in step 1 must be conducted in complete silence.
3. Go to sleep.
4. Do not utter a word until after your dreams or whatever you recollect of them are recorded in the morning.



July 22

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Saint of the Day

MARY MAGDALENE

Today is the feast of Mary Magdalene, among the most beloved, controversial, and mysterious saints. An integral part of the story of Jesus, her identity and the roles she plays are subject to bitter debate and numerous conflicting books. (Please see [June 4](#), the feast of Mary of Bethany, for more details of the

controversy.)

The most conventional explanation is that Mary Magdalene was a wealthy follower of Jesus, whose devotion was rewarded, as she was the first to witness the resurrection. She may also have been one of his disciples, although this information was suppressed after the Church was founded by misogynistic men, such as Paul and Peter. (The Russian Orthodox Church has granted Mary Magdalene the title “Equal to the Apostles.”) She may have been Jesus’s spiritual partner, and most controversially, Mary Magdalene and Jesus may have been married and she may be the mother of his children.

The matron saint of beauticians, hairdressers, sex workers, refugees, perfumers, aromatherapists, lovers, and prisoners, she is invoked in love, marriage, and fertility spells. The High Priestess or *Papesse* Tarot card may be used to represent Mary Magdalene. She is traditionally depicted with a skull, a chalice, an alabaster box, or brandishing an egg, often a red one. These objects may also be used to decorate her altar.

Numerous workings are beneficial for today:

- Crystal eggs: numerous minerals may be crafted to resemble eggs, especially quartz crystal. Eggs are symbolic of eternal life and of the seeds of new life. Crystal eggs are used to magically promote clarity, combat low-level negative entities and vibrations, and can also serve as crystal balls. Popular shamanic and witchcraft tools, if you already use them, today is a good day to cleanse and recharge them and request Mary Magdalene’s blessings upon them. Alternatively, find a favorite sacred image of Mary Magdalene holding an egg and emulate the position while holding your own egg. (Any type of egg will do, including raw, hard-boiled in the shell, or wooden.)
- Crystal skulls: in addition to the original mysterious and controversial crystal skulls of Central and South America, new, modern skulls are available as metaphysical tools. As with eggs, skulls are among Mary Magdalene’s primary symbols. Spend some time gazing into one today for contemplation and meditation or, as with crystal eggs, use it as a crystal ball.

July 23

The Pagan Roman calendar dedicated this day to two watery deities. Ideally, it's a joyous day with time and energy focused on sensual pleasures. This is potentially a beneficial day to spend at the beach, a lake, pool, hot spring, or spa, or even just enjoying your own tub or shower. Magic spells help enhance that pleasure.

Magic Power Bath

Pine and other evergreens are associated with empowered psychic abilities, as well as actual, physical cleaning. (Consider the popularity of Pine-Sol.) Pine is also sacred to Greek deity Poseidon, whose power and myth have become closely identified with his Italian counterpart Neptune, celebrated today. It's a popular fragrance, and many wonderful, commercially available bath products exist. Alternatively, you can create your own, using either essential oils or dried pine needles. If using dried pine needles, place them in a muslin drawstring bag along with any other desired materials. Hang this from the tub faucet, so that the water runs through it into your bath.

SAFETY TIP: Be careful with essential oils, as those extracted from evergreens are sometimes skin irritants. Try a skin-patch test first and, even if there's no irritation, use sparingly. A few drops go a long way. Add the drops of essential oil to a shot glass of vodka or other alcohol (not to drink; strictly for blending purposes). Add some rosemary or petitgrain essential oils, too, to enhance the power and fragrance. Add this to your bath once the tub is full and the water turned off.



Spirits of the Day

NEPTUNE

The Neptunalia celebrates Neptune as the Lord of Waters. Prior to present associations as a King of the Sea, Neptune was a freshwater deity, and the Romans continued to request his blessings and protection for fresh water. If you

live in a community where drinking water is unsafe or questionable, it's the ideal time to seek Neptune's blessings. The Romans celebrated this festival by dining *al fresco*. Weather permitting, rituals accompanied by feasting should be done outdoors.

SALACIA

Today is also the Roman festival of Salacia, the salty goddess who has dominion over saline (sea) waters, although she also presides over mineral springs. Neptune may be her consort. This Italian goddess is identified with Amphitrite, Greek goddess of the sea, in the same manner that Neptune is identified with Amphitrite's spouse, Poseidon. She may also be an aspect of another sexy sea goddess: Aphrodite. Salacia is associated with the depths of the sea and its hidden treasures and mysteries, as well as beautiful sunlit, serene seascapes.

Her name derives from a root word for "salt," as does "salary." Salacia is a goddess of wealth, good fortune, and career enhancement. Her name is also related to "salacious," which the dictionary defines as "arousing" or "appealing to sexual desire or imagination." Request her blessings so that you feel sexy, successful, and powerful. Decorate Salacia's altar with images of mermaids, sea creatures, and shells. Offer her sea salt and Italian mineral water.

July 24

National Tequila Day

Tequila is a distilled alcoholic beverage crafted from the blue agave (*Agave tequilana*) from the area around Santiago de Tequila, a town in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Like so many alcoholic beverages, it's also considered a magical and spiritual potion. Likened to truth serum, tequila's magic power allegedly encourages imbibers to reveal their true selves and intentions.

Because it is primarily pollinated by long-nosed bats, the blue agave is among the few plants to pollinate at night. The sole source of tequila, the blue agave has evolved over thousands of years together with bats, and the beverage is intrinsically entwined with these magical, flying mammals, long associated with witchcraft and nocturnal powers. (Tequila's growth in popularity and the rise of industrial agave farming has proved detrimental to both plants and bats.) To better align yourself with the spirits of tequila and perhaps obtain a plant

spirit familiar, cultivate a blue agave plant. If impossible, consider experimenting with the flower essence remedy. Tequila is a popular offering for folk saints Santa Muerte, Maximon, Jesus Malverde, and Pancho Villa.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

CHARBEL

Saint Charbel (May 8, 1828–December 24, 1898) is a boundary crosser. In life a devout Maronite monk, following his death he was quickly acclaimed a saint by the Maronite Church, but later canonized by the Vatican. Today is Charbel's Roman Catholic feast. The Maronite Church celebrates him annually on the third Sunday in July. Although he lived his life in the mountains of his native Lebanon, Charbel has become an extremely popular saint in Mexico. Back home in Lebanon, Charbel's blessings are sought by Christians and Muslims alike. He is invoked to heal all manner of illnesses and ailments.

As in life, Charbel desires very little beyond your righteous behavior. Light candles or incense for him. Offer donations and good will on behalf of the poor. If appeals to Charbel result in a miracle, offer public testimonials on his behalf.

CHRISTINA THE AMAZING

Orphaned at age fifteen, Christina of Liège (1150–July 24, 1224) experienced a seizure when she was twenty-one that left her comatose and presumed dead. Funeral services were arranged for her, but during the requiem mass, Christina sprang to life. In front of everyone, she levitated right out of her open coffin and up to the ceiling, causing a huge commotion. (And the beginning of rumors that she was possessed by demons.) A priest ordered her to come down and she did, landing on the altar. From there she announced to the congregation that while in her comatose state, she had visited Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. In Heaven, she was offered the choice of remaining with God or returning to her body, where through her devotion and suffering she could redeem many souls in Purgatory and acquire additional merit for herself before returning to Heaven after her death. Christina chose the latter. If she had any expectation of gratitude, she would be sorely disappointed.

Never the same after this experience, Christina's sense of smell became so acute that she could not bear to be in proximity with others, claiming to be overwhelmed by the scent of their sins. Nor was her levitation an isolated event: Christina levitated at will, especially when she wanted to get away from people.

She also hid in ovens and climbed tall buildings and trees, all in attempts to be alone. During her lifetime, she was not widely perceived as a holy woman. Instead, at best, she was considered a lunatic and, at worst, a victim of demonic possession.

A holy woman or a crazy person? That debate, begun in her lifetime, continues. Christina is a folk or unofficial saint, not a canonized one. She has a devoted following and a reputation for producing miracles. Today is her feast. Christina is invoked for healing, especially of depression, and mental and spiritual illnesses. She is a matron saint of the mentally ill, those diagnosed with mental disorders or accused of not being “normal,” as well as caregivers, healers, and therapists. She is also a saint of independent practitioners—those who seek to worship in their own way, even if that way is incomprehensible to others.

July 25

Today is the shared feast of Saint Christopher, James the Traveler, and Ogun, and so this is an exceptionally auspicious day for traveling. It’s also a good day for rituals to ensure safe, happy future travels. The three may be venerated together or individually.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

CHRISTOPHER

Legend has it that any day that you gaze at the iconic image of Saint Christopher is a day that you won’t die—or at least not unexpectedly. With a legend like that, who wouldn’t want to look at him daily?

The intent behind the legend was assurance that one would not die without enough time for last rites to be arranged. However, this fine point was widely overlooked, perhaps forgotten or perhaps not important to all devotees of Christopher, whose following has long been eclectic. In the early days of Christianity, images of Christopher were maintained right beside a church’s front altar, so that the only way to sneak a peek was to actually come all the way inside, not just hover by the door. Of course, once you were inside, it wasn’t polite to just leave.

After an initial bout of popularity early in the Church’s history, Christopher

remained only a moderately popular saint, until the era of modern travel began. Trains, planes, and automobiles—all potential sources of abrupt deaths—brought Christopher back to the forefront. He became and remains one of the most beloved saints, despite being among those removed from the canon roll of saints in 1969 following church reforms, as there is no documentation that a martyr named Christopher ever existed.

Saint Christopher medals and holy cards make it easy to keep an eye on the saint. You can also keep an image of him on your phone, so that you can look at him whenever you choose and especially when starting journeys. Along with being the patron saint of travelers (and those in any occupation requiring travel), he also protects children, and especially children traveling alone. His promise to prevent sudden death is not limited to the dangers of the road. He's also a great healer, invoked to prevent sudden death from epidemics, contagious illnesses, infections, and poison. He also prevents and heals ear disorders and guards against nightmares. Saint Christopher is traditionally offered candles, incense, and charitable donations, as well as travel flasks filled with coffee or something stronger.

JAMES THE GREATER

Depending on location, this great saint is also called Jacques, Jacobo, Jaime, Diego, Senjak, Santiago, or Yago. Among the original apostles, James was the son of Mary Salomé, now one of the saints known as les Maries de la Mer—the Marys of the Sea. James is a close relative of Jesus, but just how close depends on religious beliefs and biblical interpretation.

James is among the most powerful and best-loved saints. He is associated with the ancient pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Compostela in northwest Spain, where his remains reputedly lie. It's estimated that over 100,000 pilgrims visit Compostela annually, many traveling long distances on foot for weeks or even months to get there.

James is a multifaceted saint with different “paths” or aspects:

- As Saint James the Traveler, he manifests in the guise of a pilgrim. He may carry a walking stick or staff and is garbed in old-fashioned travel clothing—a cloak and broad-brimmed traveler's hat, like those worn by Odin or Mercury. You'll know it's James, however, as his hat bears the emblem of his shrine at Compostela: a scallop shell.
- As Saint James the Warrior, he manifests in military guise, often in shining armor and riding a white horse. *Always* victorious, he may be depicted

trampling his enemies and may be petitioned to trample yours. Usually portrayed with a lance or a sword, he handles *all* weapons with expertise. He is a peacekeeper precisely because he is a master of war.

The symbol of Saint James and the emblem of the pilgrimage to Compostela is the scallop shell, but he's also associated with oysters. Legend suggests that those who eat oysters today will never lack money, although this contradicts the maxim of only eating them during months whose name contain the letter "r." This may no longer be the case with farmed oysters, but consuming cooked oysters, rather than raw, may be a safe compromise. Please see [August 5](#) for more information regarding oysters.

James is the patron saint of travelers, warriors, military personnel, milliners, shoemakers, those who service either soldiers or travelers, as well as those who work with mollusks in any capacity. James is a great healer; his specialties are ailments, such as arthritis or motion sickness, that impede mobility and travel. Offer Saint James candles and charitable deeds on behalf of travelers or wanderers. Prepare *Coquilles Saint Jacques*, a French scallop dish, in his honor. Serenade him with renditions of "Saint James Infirmary." If seeking a genuine miracle, promise to visit him in Compostela or, if that's not possible, help sponsor someone else's journey.

OGUN

Just like Saint James, the great orisha Ogun has numerous paths, aspects, and manifestations. He is a healer, a soldier, a ritual leader, witch doctor, and sometimes a master gangster. He also responds to the names of the saints to whom he's syncretized including Senjak, Santiago, or James. (Please see [April 23](#) for more information about Ogun.) Like James, he is the subject of a great pilgrimage to Plaine du Nord, near Cap Haitien in Haiti.

Quick appeals may be made to Ogun by constructing spontaneous altars consisting of two crossed nails drizzled with oil, ideally red palm oil. (And if you should ever come across such crossed nails on the street or elsewhere, leave them alone.) Should your appeal be answered, construct a permanent altar for him. Ogun is private. Unlike his brother Papa Legba, who likes to be placed right beside the door for everyone to see, Ogun prefers to be kept within

cabinets, drawers, closets, or inside a three-legged iron cauldron.



July 26

Saint and Spirit of the Day

SAINT ANNE

Saint Anne is believed to be the mother of Mary, and thus the grandmother of Jesus. As one of the very few female Christian saints who is not a virgin or martyr, she is believed to be especially understanding and compassionate. Saint Anne is associated with wells and natural springs, as many were dedicated to her in attempts to Christianize them. Anne is also associated with some Black Madonnas. There is allegedly no miracle she cannot produce. She is the matron saint of grandparents, women—especially, paradoxically, the pregnant *and* the childless—as well as lace makers, and those who deal in vintage or secondhand clothes. Anne rules over the subterranean including basements, caves, and mines. Request her blessings and protection. Offer Anne candles and flowers, especially roses, as well as wine, water, or chamomile tea.

An old New Orleans chant alerts Saint Anne to your desires: “Saint Anne, Saint Anne, send me a man!”

NANA BURUKU

Nana Buruku presides over the primordial swamp from whence all existence may have emerged. An ancient spirit, she is incorporated into various pantheons of Africa. Eldest of the watery orishas, she is the mother of the orisha Babalu

Ayé. Nana Buruku precedes the Iron Age and even the Bronze Age. She refuses contact with metal. Her emblems include a bamboo knife. Envisioned as an incredibly old lady, don't let the perceived fragility fool you. She is a fierce swamp witch and a fearless, victorious warrior. It may be no coincidence that the second part of her name "Buruku" resembles Semitic words for "blessing" and "power." (Variants of her name include Nana Bukulu or Bouklou.) Nana Buruku travels in the form of a snake, her sacred creature. She is syncretized to Saint Anne, and so today is also her feast day. Maintain altars to her outside near the plants she loves.

A master herbalist, Nana Buruku is requested to bless and empower botanicals and herbal remedies. A master healer, she is invoked to heal conditions and ailments that resist diagnosis or conventional treatment. A guardian of the dead, she also provides personal fertility.

Nana Buruku is the matron of herbalists, those who seek the secrets of plants, rootworkers, potters, and those who heal with clay. Offer her roses, mandrake, and other magical roots, as well as swamp plants. If you cook for her or are preparing an altar, remember not to incorporate metal in any way. (In other words, when cutting roses from your garden for her, do not use your usual garden tools. Use your hands or wooden, stone, or crystal tools.)

Nana Buruku Popcorn Bath

Like her son, she is associated with popcorn. (Please see [December 17](#) for more information about her son, Babalu Ayé, and another ritual featuring popcorn.)

1. There is no water in this "bath." Instead, fill a tub with popcorn, leaving enough room for you to climb inside.
2. Take off your clothes and get into the tub, covering your body with the popcorn.
3. It may feel scratchy; don't let this distract you. Focus on your goals. See yourself shedding your troubles, blues, and any unnatural or unhealthy attachments the way a snake sheds its skin.
4. When you're ready, emerge from the popcorn.
5. Immediately remove all the popcorn by placing it inside a large garbage bag.
6. The popcorn must be disposed of immediately, either by placing it outside on the ground (not on your own property) for birds or animals to eat or by tossing it in living water, moving away from you, not toward you, such as a

river or stream. (Be sure to dispose of the garbage bag responsibly. Don't litter or pollute.)

7. Return home, via a circuitous route, not the exact way you came, without looking back.
8. Once you've returned, light a candle for Nana Buruku.



July 27

Swamp Protection Spell

Many consider swamps to be something negative, (“drain the swamp”) and this is not untrue; swamps can be dangerous, overwhelming places. Once you're in one, it can be challenging to get out. However, these very qualities have for millennia caused swamps to also become places of refuge. Defined as “forested wetlands” and typically found beside rivers, swamps are magically powerful places where the threshold between water and earth is concentrated. Swamps with lush vegetation and deadly inhabitants (snakes, crocodiles, alligators, mosquitoes) are formidable to those unfamiliar with them. Enter at your own risk. If the dangers are greater *outside* the swamp, however, then swamps offer a cradle of protection. No wonder swamps are so closely associated with witchcraft and powerful goddesses.

Swamp witches form alliances with fierce swamp creatures, turning them into friends, familiars, allies, and messengers. That's the premise behind this protection spell. No need to actually visit a swamp. The dangerous essence of the swamp is reproduced and harnessed on your behalf.

The spell requires a collection of items representing swamp creatures—snakes, alligators, or whatever you envision: for example, toys, small sculptures, or carved crystal creatures. You need enough of them to cast a circle around

whatever is being protected (although simply placing one at each compass point may be sufficient).

1. Hold each item in your hands and charge it with its mission.
2. Use them to create a circle around whatever they need to protect.

This originated as a childbirth spell intended to cast a circle of safety around a birthing woman but may be used to protect any space or object from a baby's crib to a cashbox or laptop. The circle may be left standing indefinitely or can be transported, as needed. The creatures can also be repurposed as needed. Just recharge them if their mission changes.



July 28

Danger often emerges from within one's home or from those closest to you including friends, family, lovers, and loved ones. This can be the hardest kind of danger to avoid or to avert magically, if only because emotions may be conflicted, leading to unfocused spell goals. Recommended materials of protection in these cases include lavender, white bryony, wormwood, and the magical formula known as *Fiery Wall of Protection*. (Please see [September 29](#) for the recipe.) Sacred beings invoked to provide this kind of protection include Archangel Michael, goddesses Juno and Yemaya, as well as Saint Rita and tomorrow's saint, Martha.

Saint Martha's Eve Protection Spell

Although Martha may be invoked to cast a bubble of protection that surrounds you wherever you go, this particular spell is intended to cleanse a specific space, somewhere you feel trapped or under siege. It's also potentially antibacterial,

which, at the very least, offers a good cover story for your actions. The spell requires Martha's sacred herbs: hyssop, rosemary, and tarragon. Ideally all three are used, but even one, accompanied by petitions to Martha, should offer a measure of protection.

1. Simmer fresh or dried herbs in a pot of water on the stove. If using essential oils, simmer the water first, then add up to five drops of each oil.
2. Using potholders, carry the steaming pot through your home or space, wafting the steam into corners, behind doors typically propped open, and over thresholds. Spend extra time in areas that are particularly stressful.
3. When you're done, don't dump out the water. Instead, allow it to cool before adding it to a bucket. Add additional water as needed. You can also add Florida Water. Use this to clean floors or wipe down walls.
4. When you're done, throw open windows, if possible. Light a candle to Saint Martha and tell her what you need.



July 29

Three days from now, Lughnasadh is celebrated. Although the modern Pagan sabbat is reduced to a one-day event, the roots of this fire and harvest festival lie in substantially longer events. Traditionalists may wish to begin celebrating today. Solar goddess Aine may have presided over festivities long before the holiday was associated and named after the deity Lugh. See [June 23](#) for more information about Aine. The final three days of July may be sacred to her, as well as August 1.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT MARTHA

Today is the feast of Saint Martha of Bethany and her alter ego, Martha the Dominator. Please see [June 4](#) and the entry for Martha's sister Mary for more information about their appearances in the New Testament.

Martha is the matron saint of housewives, domestic workers, food service employees, chefs, waiters, travelers, snake charmers, and dragon tamers. Descriptions of Martha as a "housewife" may, like descriptions of Mary Magdalene as a "fallen woman," be an attempt at diminishing her actual history, power, and influence. Martha's iconic emblems include keys and a broom, typically interpreted as household tools. But why are Martha's keys assumed to be mundane while Peter's are celestial? She, too, is a keeper of keys. Reminiscent of the goddess Hekate, whose iconography is extremely similar, Martha's keys open doors to other realms and shut them, too. With her broom, she sweeps away malicious spirits and humans alike. Martha's color is green, and her day is Tuesday. Offer her chamomile tea, images of dragons, and green candles.

MARTHA THE DOMINATOR

Whether or not Saint Martha and Martha the Dominator (*Marta la Dominadora* in Spanish) are two sides of one sacred being is subject to perspective and debate. Although Martha does appear in the New Testament, she only became a popular saint following the twelfth-century discovery of human remains in France that were identified as hers. Simultaneously, a legend from Tarascon, France, identifying Martha as the tamer of their local dragon began to spread widely. Crucially, Martha is a dragon tamer, not a dragon slayer. Her reputation as a dragon tamer was integral to her popularity, although even then it wasn't necessarily understood literally. The Church encouraged the metaphor of saintly Martha pacifying and converting Pagans, represented by dragons, or possibly even that old dragon, Satan. Local women, however, understood the metaphor differently. In an era when women had few, if any, rights and were at the whim of the monsters in their lives, Martha was understood as a man tamer. If she could transform a dragon from a vicious beast into a sweet, well-behaved, affectionate one, imagine what she could do with your spouse, male relatives, or employer? Martha is invoked to control abusive partners, errant lovers, and terrible bosses.

Martha's legend evolved further once it reached Spain in the late twelfth century. There, Martha was invoked in increasingly aggressive spells, some documented in Spanish Inquisition records. Not only was she invoked to tame abusive husbands; she became associated with love spells, especially those

intended to make a hesitant or unwilling lover obey you. In Iberian folk magic, Martha is the Queen of Domination Magic.

Some understand Martha the Dominator as merely a particularly aggressive aspect of Saint Martha, but others believe that the two are distinct beings. Traditional images of Martha of Bethany may be used to portray Martha the Dominator, but in the twenty-first century, the image of the snake charmer once almost exclusively associated with African goddess Mami Waters has come to represent Martha the Dominator, too. Statues based on a streamlined version of the classic image feature a beautiful woman, garbed in green, brandishing a large snake. A small child may sit on her lap.

Martha the Dominator Oil

A magical oil is believed to convey her blessings and power. Traditionally intended for protection spells and to encourage a happy, peaceful life, use it to enforce your will, as needed. Apply as an anointing oil or on candles. Strategically place cotton balls dipped in the oil.

1. Blend the following together: licorice root (the herb, not the candy), myrrh, calamus, and spikenard. Essential oil of myrrh and spikenard may be used, but dried botanical material is preferable, as it is necessary to grind it in a mortar and pestle. Visualize yourself grinding the target of your spell, as you wield the pestle for best success.
2. Cover with sweet almond or safflower oil. Leave the botanical material in the oil or strain it before bottling.
3. Add a little jojoba or Vitamin E oil as a preservative.

Martha the Dominator Love Spell

This spell is intended to encourage a lover's return or bring someone to you. Although traditionally conceived as a romantic spell, it could be adapted to encourage anyone's arrival. Just be sure that the person's presence is truly desirable. You will need a broom. The spell will be stronger if you can sprinkle the broom's bristles with Martha the Dominator Oil.

1. Dedicate a green candle to Martha.
2. Hold the candle in your hand while visualizing your spell's goal fulfilled. Tell Martha in clear, simple language what is needed.
3. Write the target of your spell's name on a small scrap of paper and drop it

on the kitchen floor. (Substitute or add your target's business card, as well as strands of their hair or their nail clippings, should these be in your possession.)

4. Make a vow to Martha, telling her what you will give her if she fulfills your request. (Suggestions: more or bigger candles, setting up an altar, purchasing an image.)
5. Begin to sweep the floor, always sweeping the name paper and anything else associated with your target toward you. Move around the room, always sweeping toward you, and speaking to your spell's target in a firm voice, ordering that the desired action be done and always in the present tense, something like, "Come to me and stay with me. Follow me around like this paper follows me."
6. When you feel satisfied with your spell, pick up any items associated with your target. Using tweezers, burn them in the candle flame.

PHILOMENA LUBANA

Although this serpentine Dominican metresa is called Philomena or Filomena Lubana, she is syncretized to Saint Martha, not Saint Philomena. By extension, today is also her feast. Lubana's earliest known incarnation is as a Simbi spirit from the Congo. Transported to the Western hemisphere alongside enslaved devotees, she emerged on Hispaniola, the island now shared by the modern nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. When the image of the snake charmer also associated with Mami Waters and Saint Martha arrived in the D.R., Lubana's devotees recognized her in the image, too.

Lubana may manifest as a snake or as a woman with something serpentine about her. She does not speak like a human but hisses like a snake; she may, however, communicate in words, but telepathically, not aloud. Offerings are traditionally placed on the floor for her. Here is a traditional offering:

1. Place coffee grounds on a white or green plate.
2. Carefully place one whole, intact raw egg on top of the grounds.
3. Drizzle with honey and Malta soda and place it on the floor.
4. Leave it out for an appropriate period of time, then dispose of it. If using a paper plate, dispose of that, too. Otherwise, clean and save the plate for Lubana's exclusive use.

Lubana is invoked for love, romance, and protection. She is a road-opening spirit who can remove blocks that hinder your success. When opportunity knocks, it may have been Lubana who sent it to your door. She removes curses, too.

July 30

Thunder Day Water

Today is the second of July's two Thunder Days, the final opportunity of the calendar year to create this potion. For details, see [July 20](#).

July 31

August Eve

Tonight is August Eve, just as the last day of April is May Eve and October 31 is All Hallows Eve, the night before a major festival at the start of a new month. August Eve is an ancient European Pagan fire and harvest festival, and a feast of first fruits. However, this seasonal holiday is believed to have especially ancient roots that may predate agriculture. The harvest festival may have been superimposed on ancient fertility rites, honoring the sacred marriage of the sun and the Earth. (Lughnasadh may be translated as “the marriage of Lugh.” Please see [August 1](#) for more information about this solar deity.) Tonight is exactly nine months from Beltane. Children conceived tonight could be May Eve babes. Romantic associations remain, and this is an ideal night for love and fertility spells, handfastings, and the jumping of broomsticks. Similar to Beltane, tonight may be celebrated with bonfires.



THE AUGUST HERBS

August Eve brings the annual opportunity to harvest the plants needed to create the amulet called “The August Herbs.” You cannot begin before tonight; for maximum power, the process must be completed before sunrise on August 1. From start to finish, *complete* silence must be maintained. Although ancient tradition recommends this ritual be done while naked, many will find this to be prohibitively unrealistic. As a token, eliminate as much clothing as possible; at the very least, be shoeless.

There is no specific quantity of plant material that must be gathered; however, the ritual demands specific plants. You cannot randomly substitute others. If you are missing one or two, craft the amulet anyway, leaving them out. If you lack access to any or most of the plants, then today is a good time to figure out how you will have access next August Eve. You can also request (or pay) someone else to create the amulet for you. This is not a spirit or deity-oriented ritual. There’s no need for invocations or petitions. Instead maintain a calm, serene mindset, as you silently harvest and craft.

1. Gather the August Herbs without using metal implements, so no modern gardening tools. Use your hands or ritual tools crafted from crystal, stone, or wood. If necessary, bite through a stem, assuming it’s safe to do so. These are the August Herbs: arnica, calendula, dill, lovage, mugwort, sage, tansy, valerian, and yarrow.
2. Tie the herbs together using ribbons, raffia, or some other kind of botanical material. Each herb bundle should contain each of the nine August herbs.
3. Ornament herb bundles with blue cornflowers or red corn cockles. You may also ornament with low-growing plants such as chamomile, but this isn’t necessary.
4. Place a stalk of grain inside the heart of the bundle—wheat, rye, or millet, for example. (It’s especially potent if you can gather this with your own hands, but it’s not necessary.)
5. Tie up the amulet with a red ribbon and hang it up inside your home.
6. Ideally, keep it there for a year until it’s replaced with a new one. Burn the old one in an August Eve bonfire or other source of fire.

THE VIGIL OF SAINT PETER IN CHAINS

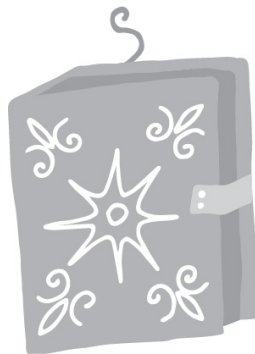
The night before the Feast of Saint Peter in Chains is known as his Vigil.

Tomorrow's feast recalls how Saint Peter was miraculously freed from prison by an angel, as told in Acts 12:3–19. From a magical perspective, the feast, beginning with the Vigil, after dark on the night of July 31, is the ideal time to break anything that binds, oppresses, or chains you, including curses, hexes, the Evil Eye, addictions, bad habits, and what Hoodoo describes as “crossed conditions,” which obstruct you from achieving your desires and goals. Peter's keys unlock the gates of success.

Saint Peter Uncrossing Spell

This spell requires a cross-shaped candle, easily available from a spiritual supply store and typically inexpensive.

1. Dedicate the candle to Saint Peter.
2. While holding the candle, pour out your heart to the saint. Tell him your troubles and fears.
3. Using the edge of a key, scratch your name into the candle wax, along with any other sigils or embellishments you may wish to add.
4. Hold the candle in your hand again, but now visualize the goal of your spell accomplished.
5. Burn the candle.



August

The name of this month honors Augustus Caesar, nephew and successor of Julius Caesar. Augustus renamed the month in his own honor in 8 BCE, not because it was his birth month—that's September—but because he considered it his lucky month, as it contains the anniversaries of his first becoming consul and his decisive defeat of his rivals Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Previously named *Sextilis*, meaning “sixth,” as it was once the sixth month of the calendar year, August is now the eighth.

Themes of this month include light or the lack thereof, as well as harvests, both literal and metaphoric. As we draw nearer to the equinox in September, days in the Northern Hemisphere are visibly shorter. While temperatures may still be high, as the month progresses, we grow closer and closer to autumn. Conversely, August can be the coldest month in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing concerns over whether the previous harvest was sufficient and how long the cold weather will last. Deities celebrated during this month include Celtic deity Lugh; Mictecacihuatl, the Aztec goddess of death; Pachamama, goddess and personification of Earth in the Andes; and lunar goddesses Diana and Hekate.

Although tragedies occur in every month, August has had more than its fair share. August is an excellent time for protection magic and for expanding your repertoire of protective spells.

Angel of August: Hamaliel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Leo and Virgo

Bird of the Month: kingfisher

Birthstones of the Month: peridot, sardonyx, spinel,

Flowers of the Month: gladiolus, poppy

Animal of the month: alpaca

August's Holidays and Extra Power Days

Lammas, Lughnasa: August 1

Festival of Torches, dedicated to Diana and Hekate: August 13

August 15: a magical day dedicated to the Feminine Divine

August 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Lammas

Lammas may be understood as marking the time when pregnant Earth delivers her harvest. The name of this festival derives from the Old English *hlaf-maesse* (“loaf-mass”). Bread made from the year’s first harvest was and is traditionally blessed in churches today. This seemingly Christian practice was intended to activate these blessed loaves so that they possessed magical properties for protecting the new grain. In some locations, these loaves were now also believed to possess the power to heal. Lammas-blessed loaves were thus rarely eaten, but instead preserved as talismans and amulets. Lammas now also names a beloved, modern Wiccan sabbat, devoted to harvests, literal and metaphoric. This may reflect that, despite its Christian veneer, Lammas’ roots may lie in ancient pre-Christian festivals, similar to Lughnasa, also celebrated today.

Celebrate Lammas with magic of the harvest, bread, and grain. Craft corn-sheaf or dried apple dolls. This can be a meditative time—midway through the year, one considers what has or hasn’t yet been accomplished and what to anticipate in the future. It’s a good moment to revisit New Year’s resolutions and maybe make new ones. Where are your efforts best served? And of course, Lammas is a joyful holiday: an opportunity to feast with loved ones and share the bounty.



Lughnasadh

Lughnasadh, also spelled Lughnasa, is among Ireland's four ancient fire festivals. (The others are Imbolc, Beltane, and Samhain.) The date coincides with Lammas—many scholars believe the two festivals share prehistoric roots. Many modern Pagans consider the names Lughnasa and Lammas as synonymous, although the meanings of the names are extremely different. “Lughnasadh” means “the marriage of Lugh,” referencing that Celtic deity. During Lughnasadh, this solar spirit consummates his sacred marriage to Mother Earth, with all creation invited to celebrate and revel with them.

That said, Lughnasadh is specifically an Irish festival, and Lugh was a latecomer to the Irish pantheon. The festival may have been celebrated long before his arrival. (Whether this or similar festivals were once celebrated in continental Europe, Lugh's ancient stronghold, is now unknown.) Some scholars believe the entire festival may once have paid tribute to Irish sun goddess Aine, and the three days prior to the modern holiday remain sacred to her. (See [June 23](#).) The Friday, Saturday, and Sunday following Lughnasadh or coinciding with it are dedicated to Irish moon goddess Aynia, Aine's sister or alter ego.

Lughnasadh was once significantly longer than the modern twenty-four-hour celebration, lasting approximately four weeks, beginning at the end of July and continuing into August, roughly corresponding to when the sun is in Leo. Lughnasadh may be celebrated like Lammas but is also more overtly erotic and romantic. Ancient Irish marriage fairs once took place during this time—a time to meet new partners, whether long-term, permanent, or for brief couplings. If you seek to begin or end a relationship, this is the perfect moment to take magical steps toward that goal.

Saint Peter in Chains

Saint Peter—an original Apostle, Christ's bodyguard, and the first pope—ranks among the most prominent saints, possessing numerous feast days. Today's is called “Saint Peter in Chains” and marks the miraculous rescue of the saint from prison. Although chained, an angel released him, so that he was able to escape. Please see [June 29](#) for more information about Peter. This feast traditionally begins with the Vigil of Saint Peter in Chains on July 31.

Although Peter is popular and powerful, he is not widely beloved in the manner of saints like Anthony or Martha, perhaps because he has earned a reputation for being temperamental rather than patient. If you've promised him

something—an offering or a visit—deliver it promptly, as he’s reputed to display his impatience and displeasure through fire, especially house fires. Last night was the ideal time for magic spells requesting Peter’s aid, but if the opportunity was lost, today substitutes. Today is also an excellent opportunity for straightforward requests for Peter’s help, especially in legal matters like court cases, parole and probation issues, or anything involving the pursuit of freedom and liberty.

Offer Peter white, blue, or red candles. Decorate his altars with fishing nets and marine motifs. Give him keys (but make sure these aren’t keys you need; once they’ve been given to the saint, they’re his and you can’t take them back.) Peter happily drinks arak and Galilean and Italian wines, but he probably wouldn’t refuse a beer or any kind of hard liquor.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

LUGH

Lugh, the Shining One, is the lord of craftsmanship, dexterity, victory, and light. He is the master of *all* skills especially healing, building, sorcery, poetry, war, metalwork, and music.

Lugh’s messenger is that solar bird, the raven. His sacred flowers are red corn cockles, a wildflower that, until the twentieth century, was widely found growing in wheat fields. Lugh manifests as a dazzlingly handsome, silver-tongued charmer. He is the patron of artisans, poets, healers, physicians, and warriors of all kinds. Request his help to achieve victory. Some draw parallels between Lugh’s sacred emblems and the four suits of the modern Tarot: The Cauldron of Regeneration, the Invincible Sword, the Spear of Lugh, and the Stone of Destiny. A Tarot image of the Magician may be used to represent Lugh.

PACHAMAMA

Pachamama is the most beloved goddess throughout the Andes Mountains, but especially in Peru. “Pacha” may be translated as Earth, land, the world, or the universe, and so Pachamama, also called Mama Pacha, is literally the Earth Mother, simultaneously the earth beneath our feet, the whole universe, and a personified goddess, who manifests in the form of a beautiful indigenous woman.

Pachamama *walks* the earth but she also *is* the earth. If encountered via apparition or visualization, she may be accompanied by a child or a llama. She

may wear a long, red dress or a llama wool shawl and may carry a full bag of produce—the equivalent of a cornucopia. Request Pachamama's aid in ensuring that your own harvests are bountiful, whether literal or metaphoric.

Pachamama is the mother who both protects and destroys. She bestows *and* withholds crops. She demonstrates anger through earthquakes. Although ancient, worship of Pachamama is also modern. Today is her feast day, but in Peru and elsewhere in the Andes, the entire month of August is dedicated to Pachamama. In the southern hemisphere, August may be the coldest month of the year. Thus, it is a month of tribute and appeasement for Pachamama, marking the start of a new agricultural year.

Traditionally, homes are cleaned so that they are spotless for the Feast of Pachamama. Friends gather together to celebrate. Offerings are given to Pachamama by digging a hole in the ground, which is then filled with fruits, flowers, vegetables, botanicals (in the Andes, this may include coca leaves, sacred to Pachamama), cooked food, cigarettes, and liquor. Depending on locale or tradition, these are then either covered with Earth or the offerings are burned. It's crucial that offerings be placed *in* the earth, not on it or on floors.

August 2

Roma Holocaust Memorial Day

Commemorated annually, the date of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day was selected by Roma and Sinti organizations to coincide with the Nazi liquidation of the Gypsy camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau on this day in 1944. Nearly 3,000 Roma and Sinti—the two major groups of European Gypsies—were murdered. Although no official figure exists, it's estimated that between 220,000 and 500,000 Roma were murdered during World War II by Nazis and their allies and collaborators.

Called by various names such as Gypsy, Tzigane, and Gitane, this traditionally nomadic ethnic group has been persecuted for centuries. The Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti is known in the Romani language as Porajmos, or “the Great Devouring.” It was only in 1979 that German authorities acknowledged this genocide as “racially motivated.” The Roma continue to suffer discrimination and remain widely persecuted. Many will gather today at Auschwitz, as well as other sites in remembrance. Light candles in remembrance and consider donations to the various organizations supporting Roma rights or

other positive actions.

August 3

Bird of Paradise Magic

The tall, beautiful, showy flowers of the Bird of Paradise are reminiscent of birds in flight. Technically known as *Strelitzia* and closely related to the banana plant, its folk name derives from its perceived resemblance to the avian species known as bird-of-paradise (*Paradisaea spp.*).

Bird of Paradise flowers transmit avian and solar energy, perfect for Leo season. In the Western hemisphere, they have become associated with romance, marriage, and fidelity, serving as “official” ninth anniversary wedding gifts. They are also associated with the ultimate solar bird, the fiery phoenix, and can serve as its manifestation and representative. Plant, maintain, or commune with the living plants to enhance these energies in your life. If you lack access to the plants, photos or paintings may transmit some of their power. Use an image as a screensaver for a constant reminder of the promise of resurrection inherent in the mythology of the phoenix: after the crash and burn comes rebirth and regeneration.

Birds of Paradise plants also serve as magical tools. Cut the entire stalk and use it as you would a magic wand, especially to cast circles. For one-time use, a fresh stalk is suitable. However, for repeat use, allow the stalk to dry by hanging it upside down in a well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight. White Bird of Paradise is suited for nocturnal, lunar magic, while the more typical orange blossoms radiate the power of the sun. [SAFETY TIP: Birds of Paradise are toxic to dogs, cats, horses, and possibly children.]

August 4

The yang energy of the sun has the power to dispel and prevent ghosts. Leo, the zodiac sign of the first weeks of August, is the only sign ruled by the sun. Its energy enhances the ability to remove residual hauntings from your home, office, or other areas. It's the equivalent of spring cleaning, but for ghosts rather

than clutter or dirt. Numerous ghost-banishing techniques exist, some as simple as requesting psychopomp spirits, such as Archangel Michael or Hekate, to remove them. However, many botanical techniques are tried and true, such as the following.

Prevent and Banish Hauntings

The following botanicals allegedly prevent new hauntings but also have the power to banish ghosts already in residence: angelica root, bayberry, bay leaves, mint, rosemary, and white camphor. Their presence may be sufficient, but you can also create or obtain incense in these fragrances. Infusions may be created from any combination of these plants. Here are some ways to use them:

- Circulate steam from the infusions through areas you need cleansed of ghostly presences or that just give you the creeps.
- Add the liquid to a bucket of water and then use it to clean floors or wash down walls.
- A simple, ready-made solution is to use blends crafted from essential oils of these plants in strategically placed aroma diffusers.
- Living rosemary bushes, bay laurel trees, and lilies create a zone where most ghosts feel unwelcome.
- If, conversely, you'd like to encourage ghostly presences, wisteria, moonflowers, and Dittany of Crete extend invitations.

August 5

Oyster Day

Despite the popular belief that oysters should *not* be consumed during months whose names lack the letter “r,” today is Oyster Day, because of their association with Saint James. Oysters are bivalve mollusks, renowned as aphrodisiacs and for producing pearls.

Although the scallop is his official emblem, Saint James is also associated with oysters, and it's believed lucky to eat them on his special days. Today is Old

Saint James' Day, the date of his feast prior to Gregorian calendar reforms. The reason to avoid oysters during May, June, July, and August (the months without "r" in their names) is the increased likelihood of tainted or bacteria-ridden oysters. To sidestep this issue, consume oysters cooked rather than raw. See [July 25](#) for details of Saint James.

Spirit of the Day

SALUS

Today is the feast of Salus, Roman goddess of personal health and safety. Also associated with regional safety, she may be invoked against local epidemics or to protect communities from issues impacting health and safety, such as contaminated water. If you're nervous about eating oysters today, a quick petition to Salus may be in order. A particularly ancient goddess, she is frequently venerated alongside Apollo and his son Aesculapius. (Please see [July 7](#) and [January 1](#), respectively, for details of these healers.) Her creature is the snake, emblematic of healing, as exemplified by its appearance on the caduceus, the snake-entwined staff that symbolizes the modern medical profession.

If cleansed well, oyster shells may be incorporated into altars for Saint James or Aphrodite. Scallop shells, typically larger and flatter, serve as offering plates for any marine spirit. They may be found ready for use in culinary supply shops, as accessories for the dish *Coquille Saint Jacques*.

August 6

Spirit of the Day

THOTH

Thoth is an Egyptian deity of magic and creation so primordial that he existed before Creation. In some Egyptian myths, Thoth creates himself and the world.

In others, Thoth *merely* creates writing, botany, spellcasting, stargazing, gambling, math, and geometry. Thoth is the inventor of spiritual rituals and enables shamanic communication between the living and the dead, mortals and spirits.

In his guise as a master magician, Thoth manifests as a baboon. In his guise as the sacred scribe of the universe, Thoth manifests as an ibis. He is, however, a shapeshifter supreme and can theoretically appear in *any* form.

The patron deity of occultists, magicians, sorcerers, witches, shamans, alchemists, scribes, authors, librarians, and archivists, Thoth is the official scribe in the Egyptian Hall of the Dead. He is what is described as a “cool” deity, meaning that he is calm, consistently reasonable, and does not anger easily or unpredictably. Request his aid if you need peace in your life, home, or relationships. An annual feast of Thoth is celebrated today. Appearing on numerous modern Pagan calendars, it derives from an ancient Egyptian festival, which occurred around this time but, as different calendar systems were used, may not coincide exactly with today’s date. Should you seek Thoth’s blessings for yourself, loved ones, or on your magical or writing careers, today is a good day to seek them. Thoth is also celebrated at the equinoxes, so if you need more time to get to know him, this is a good time to begin that quest, so that you’ll be ready in September. Offer him fine incense.



August 7

High John Lucky Hand Wash

High John the Conqueror is the folk name for a lucky charm derived from the root of *Ipomoea jalapa*, a type of Mexican morning glory. These brown roots come in various sizes, from tiny to large, but should fit comfortably in your hand, pocket, or charm bag. The presence of High John, named in honor of a legendary African American hero, possibly Papa Legba in disguise, draws luck magnetically to its bearer. As such, it’s a favorite of gamblers.

This spell puts High John's lucky properties to work. It requires rainwater and seven nice-sized High John roots, available for purchase online or from brick-and-mortar spiritual supply shops. Seven is traditionally a lucky number, but if you have another favorite personal lucky number, please feel free to tweak the spell. If rainwater is unavailable, substitute pure spring water instead.

1. Place the High Johns in a large pot or cauldron and cover them with a gallon of water, preferably rainwater.
2. Bring this to a boil.
3. Once the water has begun boiling, lower the heat and allow this to simmer for either 21 minutes (3×7) or 49 minutes (7×7), whichever you consider luckier.
4. Once the potion has cooled off, pour the liquid into a bottle or flask. Any extra liquid may be saved for future use or used to cleanse magical tools. (Allow the High Johns to dry, then replenish their power by soaking them briefly in wine, whisky, or another alcoholic beverage. Remove from the liquid and dry well, so that they may be used again.)
5. Before gambling, rub a bit of the liquid on your palms for good luck. Allow them to air dry. For extra luck, rub a bit on the soles of your feet, too.



Saint of the Day

SAINT CAJETANO

Cajetano (October 1, 1480–August 7, 1547), saint of work and bread, is the patron of gamblers, the unemployed, and pawnbrokers. Also known as Cajetan, Cayetano, and Gaetano, request his help if unemployed and when you need quick infusions of cash.

Reputedly, Cajetano can't resist a bet. To request his aid, bet him that he *can't* do something—find you a job or obtain rent money, for instance. He'll bet for small stakes—a candle, flowers, prayers, donations to the poor. When Cajetano wins the bet, remember to pay your debt quickly. Bigger miracles—

health emergencies, for example—may require larger stakes, but even so, Cajetano is a generous and modest saint. Today is his feast. Honor Cajetano by making donations to food banks, soup kitchens, or homeless shelters.

August 8

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BASTET

Bastet, the Mistress of the Oracle, was, for a time, the most popular goddess in Egypt and seems poised to regain her throne on the cat-loving interwebs. Also called Bast, she is portrayed in pure cat form or with a cat's head on a human woman's body. Although she may be venerated at any time, today is International Cat Day, and Bastet is the preeminent cat goddess.

The first documented image of her dates to approximately 3000 BCE. Bastet is a goddess of the joys of life. A tomb inscription describes her as bestowing "life, prosperity, and health every day and long life and beautiful old age." Bastet has dominion over magic, music, joy, dancing, healing, fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. She protects against illness, animal attack (especially those caused by venomous creatures), poverty, infertility, and illness. Bastet is the matron goddess of magicians, diviners, and healers and offers special protection to women and children. Keep an image of Bastet in a child's room to provide spiritual protection, especially while sleeping. Consider dedicating cat-shaped candles to Bastet when requesting her assistance.

THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS

If one saint or spirit can provide a miracle, imagine what a whole team can do? That's the premise behind the conglomeration known as the Fourteen Holy Helpers, as well as other groups of spirits, such as the Seven African Powers, the Eight Immortals, or Japan's Seven Spirits of Good Fortune. The tradition of invoking these fourteen saints together originated in the Rhineland during the fourteenth century, an era of devastating plagues and epidemics. Each of the following saints is a great healer, and invoking them together was believed to cover all bases. While each saint has their own individual feast day, today is their shared feast. Although regional variations exist, the saints of the Fourteen Holy Helpers include:

- Acacius
- Barbara
- Blaise
- Catherine of Alexandria
- Christopher
- Cyriac
- Denis
- Elmo
- Eustace
- George
- Giles
- Margaret of Antioch
- Pantaleon
- Vitus

Invoke them together today and request that they protect your health in the year to come. You may also ask that they heal whatever ails you. Light one candle per saint, if you like, or one big candle to serve all of them. For a little extra emphasis, scratch their names on the candle(s). “Fourteen” doesn’t have to literally be fourteen. Some like to include Mary, the Blessed Mother, in the group, creating Fifteen Holy Helpers. Feel free to add your favorite saints to the group, but don’t remove any. In other words, you can appeal to a group of eighteen saints on an altar for the Fourteen Holy Helpers but having only twelve or thirteen weakens the grouping.

SAINT MARY MACKILLOP

Mary MacKillop (January 15, 1842–August 8, 1909) is a saint of firsts. The first canonized saint from Australia, in 1867, she became the first sister and Mother Superior of the newly formed Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Mary is also among the few saints to have been excommunicated, albeit briefly. In 1870, Mary became aware that a local priest was sexually abusing children, and reported this to the priest’s superiors. They transferred him to Ireland, although the official cause for his transfer was alcohol abuse, not child molestation. Other

local priests, angered by Mary's actions, spoke against her to Bishop Lawrence Sheil, and on September 22, 1871, Mary was excommunicated for insubordination. The excommunication lasted for five months—Bishop Sheil revoked it on his deathbed.

Saint Mary MacKillop has emerged as a guardian of children and a spiritual guide and advocate for victims of clerical abuse, as well as those sexually abused, especially by those in positions of authority. Today is the anniversary of her death and her feast day. Light pink candles for her and plant Mary MacKillop roses, named in her honor.

August 9

Destroy All Evil Formula

This Hoodoo formulation is believed to remove any spiritual dangers or unwanted spiritual presences that may cling to you. It also reputedly protects against them, creating a magical boundary of safety around you.

1. Blend one cup of Florida Water (see [April 12](#) for the formula) with one cup of Hungary Water (see [November 17](#)).
2. Add one-half cup of Four Thieves Vinegar (see [November 4](#)) and at least one-half cup of sea salt.
3. Blend the ingredients well.
 - Add the formula to your bathwater. If you can submerge in the water, it's beneficial. If bathing with the formula, be sure to incorporate gentle vinegar into your Four Thieves, rather than harsh white vinegar or similar.
 - Alternatively, place the formula into a spray bottle to serve as a space cleanser. The vinegar and salt, as well as the alcohol in Florida Water, may damage furniture or other surfaces—it's sufficient to spray into the air, especially near thresholds and corners.

For added protection, recite the 91st and 104th Psalms, believed to remove and repel harm and create an aura of protection. Murmur them over the formula as you're concocting it. Recite them while using the formula. No need to memorize them, although you can. Reading them, whether in the original

Hebrew or in any other language you prefer or comprehend, works.



August 10

For good or for ill, the energy of today expedites banishing and removal spells and actions. If you fear that *you* are in danger of being banished or removed, take added precautions. Conversely, if you feel the need to remove someone, this day's energies may enhance your power, but be sure you are justified and that no astrological aspects cause complications.

Spirit of the Day

CLEOPATRA

Pharaoh Cleopatra VII is the subject of innumerable legends, stories, books—both fiction and nonfiction—as well as other creative endeavors, from Shakespeare's play to movies starring film icons like Theda Bara, Claudette Colbert, and Elizabeth Taylor. In life, she was extraordinary: a keen strategist and multilinguist, she was the first of the Ptolemaic pharaohs to speak Egyptian, the native language of her people. (The Macedonian dynasty continued to speak Greek, the language of Alexandria's elite, long after they conquered Egypt.) During her lifetime, Cleopatra was considered a living avatar of goddesses Aphrodite and Isis, reflecting her Greek and Egyptian heritages. Following her death, many considered her a goddess.

It is generally, but not exclusively, believed that Cleopatra committed suicide following Octavian's (the future Augustus Caesar) conquest of Egypt, rather than submit to him. The date of her death is now unclear but was either August 10 or 12 in 30 BCE, and so either date may be considered her feast day.

Cleopatra may be venerated in the company of the goddesses she loved: Aphrodite, Hathor, and Isis, as well as other members of the Greek and Egyptian pantheons. Light candles for her and offer luxurious incense and perfumes. Request her help to protect your children and promote your love life.

Cleopatra Oil

A modern magical formula oil inspired by the life of Cleopatra is typically used in seduction and love spells, although its ingredients also lend itself to protection spells. Frankincense and myrrh invoke the immortal romance of Isis and Osiris. When Cleopatra sailed to meet Mark Antony, her boat's sails were scented with fragrant cypress oil, announcing her presence before her actual arrival. Add the following ingredients to a base of sweet almond oil: essential oils of cypress, frankincense, myrrh, and either neroli or petitgrain. Start with just a few drops each, adjusting quantities, so that the scent pleases you. A little Cleopatra Oil goes a long way. Dab it on sheets, pillowcases, love letters, and erotic candles.

August 11

A moon-gazing mermaid plus three amazing saints: a crystal-gazer, a dragon-banisher, and an insouciant superstar—today is all about the Feminine Divine. If today's saints and spirits do not resonate with you, then honor the Feminine Divine that does or locate it within yourself. If this sounds inexplicable or leaves you at a loss, today may be a good day to seek and explore.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT ATTRACTA

Attracta, the Anglicized variant of her Celtic name Araght or Adhract, the daughter of a noble Irish family, lived during the fifth and sixth centuries. Depending on your preferred version of her legend, Attracta either slew or banished a dragon terrorizing Ireland. She either killed it bare-handed or banished it permanently by brandishing her crozier at it like a magic wand.

Attracta is associated with sacred wells, as well as with rock formations. Numerous locations are named in her honor. Today is her feast. She is associated with miraculous rescues from all sorts of dangers, physical, spiritual, and magical. Light a candle for her and request her help. If she provides a substantial miracle, a visit to one of the locations associated with her in Ireland may be in order or, if impossible, perhaps a donation toward their upkeep.

SAINT CLAIRE

Claire (Chiara) Offreduccio (July 16, 1194–August 11, 1253) became Saint Claire of Assisi, among the most beloved of all saints. Daughter of a count, she heard Francis of Assisi preach in the streets and was transfixed. On Palm Sunday 1212, Claire ran away from home to join Francis. Claire wished to travel, preach, and beg alongside Francis, but this wasn't considered seemly for a woman. The relationship between Francis and Claire was already scandalous, and so she accepted a cloistered life, remaining his disciple. Claire founded a religious order, the Poor Ladies, now called the Poor Claires in her honor.

Officially, Claire is the matron saint of gilders, goldsmiths, and needle workers, such as embroiderers. She is invoked for true love, marital prospects, and children, especially female children. In 1958, Claire was appointed the official matron saint of television in recognition of an incident in which, too ill to visit a Christmas Nativity scene she longed to see, Claire miraculously “saw” it on the walls of her cell, just as if she were there and just as if she were watching it on TV. Anyone who works with television in any capacity—or perhaps those who just love or depend on it—may claim her as their saint.

Unofficially, Claire is the matron saint of fortune-tellers, crystal gazers, and clairvoyants. Claire's iconic votive imagery depicts her as a nun with a monstrance, the vessel used in Roman Catholic rites to display the host. Claire's monstrance is sometimes depicted as glowing, as if lit from within, like the famous glass of milk in Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Suspicion*. For those unfamiliar with Catholic rites, the monstrance is easily confused with a crystal ball, and so the picture seems to depict Claire as a subversive crystal ball-gazing nun. Saint Claire is the matron of the “clairs”—heightened senses including clairaudience, clairgustation, clairsentience, and clairvoyance. Burn candles for her and request that she heighten your psychic senses and abilities or help you learn to use and control them.

Today is Claire's primary feast and the ideal time to petition and honor her. Her color is white: burn white candles and offer white flowers.

Saint Claire Reversing Spell

This spell is intended to remove negative energy or malicious spells affecting you. Cast the spell in a leisurely fashion—don't skip the scrying part, even if you're not a natural scryer, as it mimics iconic imagery of Saint Claire. If it helps, envision yourself scrying alongside her or request that she improve your psychic vision.

1. Break an egg and separate the yolk from the white.

2. Do what you will with the yolk but add the egg white to a wine glass filled with water. You want a classic wine glass with a wide, stable base.
3. Take a few moments to scry—gaze into the glass to see whether shapes formed by the egg white mean anything to you or remind you of anything.
4. When Step 3 is complete, place a plate *over* the top of the glass. Holding it there firmly, flip the glass, so that the plate is now *below* the glass, which is upside down. If you do this quickly and with sure hands, the eggy water will not spill out. (And if it does, wash the glass and the plate, disposing of the egg water, and then repeat the spell until you can get it to work.) Gently place on a flat surface, such as a table or counter.
5. Place a small white candle atop the base of the inverted wine glass and light it.
6. While the candle is burning, invoke Saint Claire and request that anything negative that may be attached to you be removed and sent back whence it came.
7. Once the candle has burned down completely, dispose of the contents of the glass outside your home or by flushing it down the toilet.

CLAIRMESINE CLAIRMEILLE

When enslaved Haitians saw images of Saint Claire's monstrance, they too mistook it, but not for a crystal ball. Instead, they saw a glowing full moon and recognized the beautiful moon-gazing mermaid, Clairmesine Clairmeille, now sometimes called Vodou Saint Claire. Images of the saint may be used to represent her, but images of mermaids are also used.

Clairmesine travels in the entourage of the Ezilis (see [June 9](#)). Her mythology varies: she may be the sister of Ezili Freda Dahomey or of Lord Agwé. She may be married to Papa Zaka or Saint Nicholas (yes, Mrs. Claus may be a tropical mermaid). Clairmesine is extremely psychic and may be requested to bless you with psychic abilities, too—or remove them temporarily, if they are too much for you. Celebrate her if you love the moon, the sea, and mermaids.

Clairmesine is a sweet-singing moon-gazer who dances among moon beams. Petition her at night, when she is most active. Because of her identification with Saint Claire, today is her feast day, too, although Clairmesine may be invoked on any full moon night. Offer her blue and white candles and decorate her altar with lunar and marine images.

SAINT PHILOMENA

This mysterious and powerful teenage saint is a paradox: simultaneously modern and ancient. In 1802, archaeologists excavating Rome's Catacombs of Saint Priscilla discovered a sealed shelf tomb. When opened, they found the bones of a young girl, estimated to be approximately twelve years old, and a broken vial of blood believed to be hers. Her skull was fractured. The tomb had been sealed with three decorated terra cotta tiles in a style typically indicating Christian martyrs of noble birth and inscribed with the incomprehensible and untranslatable funerary inscription: LUMENA PAXTE CUMFI. However, *if* rearranged, similar to Scrabble tiles, they might read PAXTE CUMFI LUMENA, which could then be translated as "Peace with you, Philomena." Thus, the young martyr was understood to be named Philomena and her relics placed in storage.

In 1805, a priest seeking the relics of a virgin for his church in Mugnano, near Naples, was overcome with a sense of joy as he passed Philomena's urn. He requested her transfer. The remains were encased in a statue and brought to Mugnano, where, on the day she arrived, a lengthy drought abruptly ended. It was just the first of the literally countless miracles attributed to the little saint. On August 10, 1823, her statue began oozing a mysterious oil, soon credited with healing miracles. (As of this writing, the statue continues to exude oil, which may be obtained from her shrine.)

Philomena shot to superstardom among saints and was put on the fast track to canonization. She was canonized in 1837, only 35 years after the discovery of the box of bones. To put this in context, Joan of Arc, who died in 1431, was only canonized in 1920. Philomena became the go-to saint for virtually everything worldwide.

No prior documented evidence of a martyr named Philomena exists. All legends of her date from after the discovery of the bones and were obtained via channeling and visionary experiences. Like a shooting star, Philomena's extraordinary popularity was not to last or at least not officially. The absolute passion many felt for Philomena ultimately made the Vatican nervous, as did her growing association with folk religion. On February 14, 1961, Philomena was withdrawn from the official calendar of saints. Her shrine at Mugnano remains open and devotees continue to testify to the miracles she produces.

Like Saint Jude and Saint Rita, Philomena is a saint of impossible causes, meaning that she can do *anything* and provide *any* miracle, no matter how impossible it seems. She is credited with healing terminal illnesses including cancer, AIDS, gangrene, and heart disease. Philomena provides fertility and rescues children. She has a reputation as a bit of a trickster who likes having fun and occasionally plays pranks. Devotees claim to hear her laughing when she's

pleased. Usually portrayed as a very pretty young girl, her colors are red, white, and pink. Today is her feast. Offer her candles, flowers, and things a young girl might like. If you desire something that seems impossible even to you, Philomena is the one to ask.

August 12

The Lychnapsia

This Roman festival of lights is dedicated to the goddess Isis and believed to derive from one of her Egyptian holy days, possibly one celebrating her birthday. Honor her with candles, lamps, and other lights. A birthday cake with candles would be highly appropriate. (Please see [March 5](#) for more information about Isis.)

Spirits of the Day

LORD GANESHA

Elephant-headed Ganesha, also known as Ganapati and Kangiten, perhaps the most adored member of the Hindu pantheon, is venerated by *millions*. Among the most beloved deities on Earth regardless of affiliation, Ganesha, the Lord of Beginnings, is also loved by Buddhists, Jains, modern Pagans, as well as the unaffiliated. Ganesha's blessings are sought before starting any new endeavor. The Lord of Obstacles, he is a road-opening spirit who removes obstacles from the paths of his devotees (but may also create them if angered, ignored, or seeking your attention.) A kind, benevolent, and usually forgiving spirit, Ganesha is also a bit of a trickster. (And remember: an elephant never forgets.) Ganesha may be venerated as part of a holy family, alongside his parents Shiva and Parvati, and he is also venerated alongside goddesses Lakshmi and Sarasvati.

Ganesha can remove all blocks and challenges in your path. Invoked for blessings of prosperity, safety, victory, love, marital happiness, better sex, material comforts, and psychic skill, he also heals illnesses and removes effects of negative karma. Ask for his help with lengthy, multigenerational curses. Like Janus and Papa Legba, Ganesha likes to be the first invoked in all rituals and ceremonies. He is the guardian of crossroads, gates, and thresholds. Request his

protection for yourself and your household.

Ganesha will allegedly help anyone who approaches him with a pure and respectful heart. His primary feasts are dated to correspond with Hindu calendars, but as today is World Elephant Day, today is an excellent moment to seek his blessings for you, your loved ones, and the elephants of the world. He favors musicians, and his element is water. Ganesha accepts very humble offerings if given with a good heart. (But of course, those who can afford more should not hesitate to be generous with him.) He enjoys sweets, fruits—especially bananas—nuts, and sugarcane. His favorite offering is *modak*, a sweet Indian dumpling. Allegedly, the more modak you give him, the more Ganesha is inclined to work in your favor.

August 13

The Festival of Torches

This ancient and annual festival honors the lunar goddess Diana. The thirteenth day of a lunar month typically coincides with or just precedes a full moon, and so this was once a full moon festival. This is not necessarily the case with the Gregorian fixed calendar date. Should it be a full moon, the night will be extra magical, but pay attention to moon phases tonight, *whatever* they are, and consider their implications when planning your magic. (Waxing moons benefit magic intended to create and increase, while waning moons enhance magic intended to diminish and remove.) In addition, should today happen to be a Friday the 13th, it is extra sacred and magically powerful. Request Diana's blessings.

During the Festival of Torches, torchlit processions honoring Diana were held. Pilgrimages were made to her shrine at Lake Nemi in Italy and elsewhere. Although this was originally an Italian festival, Roman soldiers and settlements carried Diana's veneration throughout Europe.

Depending on your situation and location, torchlit processions may still be held. However, torchlit outdoor rituals celebrating Diana may suffice. If you lack the space, require privacy, or if weather doesn't permit, light candles indoors. A second festival of Diana follows on August 15. For devotees of Diana, the Festival of Torches inaugurates an extended period of honoring this goddess. Lovers of Artemis honor their goddess today, too. In the twenty-first century, the Festival of Torches is also associated with Hekate.

Widdershins Lunar Magic Spell

That left hand motion, also known as counterclockwise, anti-sunwise, or widdershins, is typically associated with banishing spells. It has other uses, too, however. Today is International Left Hander's Day and, in conjunction with the feast of Diana, it's the perfect time for this widdershins lunar power spell. Its goal is to raise your personal magical energy, simultaneously harmonizing it with the moon's. It is a method of absorbing lunar magical power. Simply dance widdershins by yourself or in company with others. A group of thirteen is ideal, as it's the number of months in a lunar year. If you have a focal point, such as a large tree, dance around it, but it's sufficient to just spin or twirl counterclockwise for as long as you'd like. This spell is traditionally used to enhance fertility power but will also increase personal magical or creative power and bring you closer to tonight's lunar goddesses.

Spirits of the Day

DIANA

Diana, Mother of the Forest, a primordial goddess, is believed to originate in Italy. Her earliest known incarnations may be Etruscan or Latin. Certainly, she preceded the Romans in the region, although, having embraced her, it was their armies who spread her veneration throughout Europe. She may once have been the preeminent goddess in the Roman pantheon, ruling the night while Jupiter ruled the day. Diana is an ecstatic, shamanic, wild, independent goddess. As Rome became increasingly militarized, she became increasingly marginalized. Associated with women, slaves, and immigrants, her role was diminished as Juno's star rose.

Diana is a goddess of the moon, fire, water, witchcraft, wilderness, wild nature, women, children, magic, fertility, and freedom. Outlaws and escaped slaves once found refuge at her shrine at Lake Nemi, known as the Mirror of Diana, located south of Rome. Over the centuries, Diana was identified with Greek lunar goddess Artemis, meaning that their names are often used interchangeably. (See [June 6](#) for more about Artemis.) They are not identical, however. Diana is a more flexible goddess, having urban incarnations as well as rural, unlike her Greek counterpart. Also unlike Artemis, Diana has male consorts and a vast community of male devotees. It's believed that the original

werewolves—not the Hollywood variety—were lunar priests of Diana, wolf-shamans who would congregate to howl at full moons.

Diana's colors are those of the moon: silver and white. She is a Lady of the Beasts, a lover of all animals, but especially hounds, wolves, deer, and black cats. Diana is the matron goddess of witches, shamans, fortune-tellers, dream interpreters, outlaws, slaves, and thieves. She has dominion over women but does not have a contentious relationship with men, as does Artemis. It's traditional to offer her round cakes lit with candles, the prototype of the birthday cake.

Although historically the Festival of Torches is Diana's feast, many now celebrate Hekate instead, especially as torches are among Hekate's emblematic symbols. More information about Hekate is found on [November 16](#).

August 14

“Horse and hattock, in the devil’s name!” According to the confessions of Isobel Gowdie, that rhyme enabled members of her thirteen-member coven to transform beanstalks and wheat stalks into transportation devices so that they could fly to witches’ sabbats. Among the most mysterious and intriguing figures of the witch-hunting era, in April 1662, Isobel Gowdie, a farmer’s wife from Scotland, reputedly voluntarily confessed to practicing witchcraft. *Why* she confessed, the events leading up to her confession, or even whether her confession really was voluntary, are unknown, as is what happened to her after her confession. What does exist are her fascinating confessions, given in a series of four interviews. Gowdie continues to fascinate as well as inspire: for instance, the lyrics of the song “The Fabled Hare” were based on her trial testimony and written by songwriter Maddy Prior, who was born on this day in 1947.

According to Gowdie, members of her coven were able to shapeshift into other forms for their jaunts and rampages. She claimed that uttering the following charm three times enabled her to transform into a hare, the animal most closely associated with witchcraft in Britain.

*I shall go into a hare
With sorrow and sighing and little care
And I shall go in the devil's name
Until I come home again*

The following charm would then help her resume human form:

*Hare, hare, God send thee care
I am in a hare's likeness now, but I shall be a woman soon
Hare, hare, God send thee care.*

According to Gowdie, her coven used clay image magic to kill the local landowner's male children. She was unable to replicate these spells, as she claimed she had lost her powers as soon as she confessed. The devil had deserted her.

Clay image magic is, however, widespread and continues to be practiced. Although Gowdie's spell was reputedly used to kill, this type of magic can be used to heal, protect, or bless. What it does is establish contact between yourself and another.

1. Create an image using clay. Artistic ability helps but is not necessary. Keep the target of your spell foremost in your mind as you roll and shape the clay.
2. Personalize the figure: write the person's name on a slip of paper to be inserted inside the doll, for example, or if you have any of what Hoodoo labels "personal concerns"—fingernail clippings, bodily fluids, or strands of hair—add these, too. The greater the personalization, the more likely your spell is to work.
3. Allow the clay to dry. Once it has, it can be dressed in the target's clothes or in scraps of fabric torn from them. You can also create clothing that mimics that of your target, or you can leave your doll naked.



August 15

The Assumption of Mary

The Feast of the Assumption commemorates the earthly death of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and celebrates her bodily assumption into Heaven. Locations associated with Mary will be filled with pilgrims and tourists.

Feast of Diana

Today is among the goddess Diana's most significant annual feasts. Please see [August 13](#) for more about Diana. On this day, devotees traveled to Diana's shrine in the Grove of Aricia in the Forest of Nemi, near Rome, many accompanied by leashed, crowned hounds. Today is an excellent time for any veneration of Diana, as well as to seek her blessings upon your dogs and other animals. It is an excellent time for witchcraft initiations, as well as initiating any new magical path.

Feast of the Ezilis

The various Ezili spirits are syncretized to different aspects of Mary. Any or all of the Ezili spirits may be celebrated today, including Ezili Freda Dahomey, La Sirène (Ezili of the Sea), and Ezili Dantor. Please see [June 9](#) for more information about this family of spirits. If you hope to honor all of them, be aware that these sister spirits do not all get along and may be best served separately, especially if you do not have intimate knowledge of them.

Today is considered an excellent day to celebrate and honor any or all the female spirits of Haitian Vodou, not only those belonging to the Ezili family.



Spirit of the Day

YEMAYA, QUEEN OF THE SEA

Because Yemaya is identified with various aspects of Mary, by extension, today may also be celebrated as her feast. Please see [January 1](#) for more information about this Queen of the Sea.

August 16

Saint of the Day

SAINT ROCHE

Roche, also known as Saint Rock, Rocco, Roch, and Roque (1293–August 16, 1327), a nobleman's son from Montpellier, France, is closely associated with healing and preventing epidemics and severe illnesses. He may be invoked to heal *any* epidemic or plague, as well as rabies, skin diseases, gangrene, knee injuries, and ailments affecting mobility. He is the saint of pilgrims, travelers, dogs, and those who love them. He is invoked to prevent and end imprisonment, especially for those afraid that they will die in jail. He is the patron saint of cemetery workers, gravediggers, those who work in the funeral trade, masons, stonecutters, invalids, and those falsely accused or unable to defend themselves. Roche is traditionally portrayed in pilgrim's garb, wearing a traveler's hat and cloak, holding a staff, and accompanied by a dog. Like the Fisher King, he points to a large, mysterious wound on his thigh. Roche is among the saints most associated with Black Madonnas. His traditional offerings are wine and candles. Offerings are made on behalf of prisoners and dogs. Attach Saint Roche medals to dogs' collars as protective amulets.

“VSR” stands for *Vive Saint Roche* (“Saint Roche Lives” or “Live Saint Roche”). French folk tradition suggests placing those letters above doorways to prevent contagious illnesses from entering.

August 17

Black Cat Appreciation Day

Because of superstitions that black cats are unlucky, they are often the last to be adopted from shelters. By extension, a high percentage of euthanized shelter cats are black. (These superstitions affect black dogs, too.) Black Cat Appreciation Day was the brainchild of Wayne Morris in honor of his sister who loved black cats. The date August 17 was chosen to coincide with the day that she died at age thirty-three, only two months after the death of Sinbad, her beloved twenty-year-old black cat.

Celebrate Black Cat Appreciation Day by adopting black cats, if possible. You can also work to dispel these superstitions by sharing images and stories of your own pets or by sharing posts about the holiday or artwork featuring black cats. It’s also an excellent time to venerate black cat spirits, such as Lilith, Hekate, Diana, and Muso Koroni.

A formula for lucky Black Cat Oil is found in the entry for [January 17](#).

August 18

Saint of the Day

SAINT HELENA

Today is a feast of Saint Helena. Please see the entry for [May 21](#) for more information about this saint. Ask Helena to bless your love life. She may also be invoked to empower gazing crystals and crystal gazers. Today is an excellent day for all manner of candle and love spells.



August 19

The Vinalia Rustica

The Roman feast of the *Vinalia rustica* (“The Rustic Vinalia”) is celebrated today, scheduled to begin prior to the grape harvest and pressing. Believed to be the most ancient festival of Venus, it honors her in her original guise as an agricultural goddess. The day honors Venus Obsequens believed to be the most ancient aspect of this goddess. Gardens, especially kitchen gardens, and vineyards may be dedicated to her today. If already dedicated, seek her blessings and give thanks. Alternatively, celebrate by sharing wine or other beverages with good companions, ideally in an outdoor setting. Raise a toast to Venus.

Spirits of the Day

APHRODITE

Beautiful Aphrodite is a powerful goddess of love, sex, fertility, war, and victory. In her earliest incarnation, Aphrodite was akin to Semitic goddesses like Astarte and Ishtar. (Some believe the three goddesses to be one and the same.) The ancient Greeks who adopted Aphrodite into their Olympian pantheon were uncomfortable with the Semitic merger of love and war goddesses, and so Aphrodite’s military aspects were suppressed. Aphrodite emerged as the ultimate love goddess, ruler of aphrodisiacs.

According to Greek myth, when Uranus, Lord of the Sky, was castrated by his son Chronos, his severed penis, dripping with blood and sperm, landed in the fertile sea. Aphrodite was born from this union of sea and sky, emerging from

the sea foam. She sailed to land on a giant scallop shell, landing in Cyprus. *Kteis*, the Greek word for scallop, also signifies “vulva.” The image of Aphrodite on her scallop shell has been immortalized in fine art and garden statuary. She also sometimes manifests as a mermaid. She is the type of goddess known as a Lady of the Beasts and is typically accompanied by creatures of all kinds. Although today is Venus’ feast, for many the two goddesses are inseparable, and so Aphrodite’s devotees may wish to celebrate her today. She is the matron goddess of lovers, sex workers, creators of aphrodisiacs and erotica, and practitioners of sex magic, as well as mariners and sailors including those literally employed in those professions, as well as sailors on the seas of love and life. Request her blessings upon your endeavors and relationships.

VENUS

Venus, a beautiful Italian goddess of agricultural fertility, associated with vegetable gardens and vineyards, became explicitly associated with Aphrodite after Julius Caesar came to power. His family claimed descent from Aphrodite who, according to myth, was the mother of the hero Aeneas, who led Trojan refugees to safety in Rome. The unification of the two goddesses underscored Caesar’s divine origins while also rooting it firmly on Italian soil. Venus predates the Romans in the region. Today she is celebrated in her earliest incarnation, although it is now virtually impossible to disentangle her from Aphrodite.

Venus absorbed Aphrodite’s associations with the planet Venus as morning and evening star. As the morning star, she is the goddess of love and romance, promoter of the *ars amatoria*—the arts of love. As the evening star, she is a Queen of Witches, matron goddess of the venefic arts, referencing her role as goddess of plants that cause harm, as well as those that nourish. The dictionary definition of the Latin word *venefic* is “poisonous” or “pertaining to poison.” Likewise, the Latin word for poison (*venenum*) derives from her name. Venus is a goddess of the poison path. If you seek a magical or poison garden, today is a good day to begin, cultivate, or plan it.

August 20

Glory Water

This magical formula water is intended to help you achieve glory in whatever

field you choose, and being the height of summer, today is a good time. The key ingredient, the one without which it is no longer Glory Water, is orange blossom water.

1. Add several drops of essential oil of bergamot and essential oil of frankincense to a base of orange blossom water or neroli hydrosol. (Neroli is the pricey essential oil derived from orange blossoms.)
2. If you prefer a more intense orange aroma, add essential oils of petitgrain and tangerine in addition to the other ingredients. If seeking erotic glory, add one or two drops of essential oil of ginger.
3. Add Glory Water to a spray bottle and mist clothing, sheets, and indoor areas. You can also spray yourself, but be sure to avoid exposure to the sun, as several of these essential oils are photosynthesizers, meaning that they increase the likelihood of sunburn and other dangerous effects of the sun.

August 21

Saint of the Day

MARINA THE MONK

When Marina, born in what is now Lebanon during the fifth century, was five, her mother died. Her father joined a monastery. Wishing to keep his daughter with him, he disguised her as a boy, renaming her Marinus. Eventually Marina became a monk, too, and her true identity became a life-long secret. How secret? Although Marina spent most of her life in the monastery, she spent one night in an inn, while traveling. The young monk caught the eye of the pregnant bartender, who, seeking to protect the true father of her child, accused Marina of impregnating her.

Refusing to defend herself by revealing the impossibility, Marina was dismissed from the monastery in disgrace and forced to beg outside its gates by a grotto. When the baby was born, it was given to Marina, who miraculously was able to breastfeed the child, a boy, who would also eventually join the monastery. Although Marina was eventually permitted to return to the monastery, her penance wasn't over. Assigned only the most menial and unpleasant tasks, it was only after her death, when her body was prepared for burial, that her secret was revealed. Immediately hailed as a saint, miracles were

attributed to her. Considered a great healer, Marina is requested for help with childbirth and lactation. Offer her incense, candles, and gifts for her baby. Marina may be venerated together with Saint Margaret, who is also sometimes called Marina. Please see [July 20](#) for more information about Margaret.

August 22

Love Potion No. 9

Love Potion No. 9 was popularized by the song written and composed by songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, recorded first by The Clovers in 1959, with subsequent versions by The Coasters and The Searchers. Today marks the anniversary of lyricist Leiber's death in 2011. Concoct it for yourself. Love Potion No. 9 may indicate that it's the ninth formula, following Love Potions 1–8, although many have interpreted the name as referring to the number of ingredients.

1. Choose nine of the following: Cardamom pods, Cubeb, Damiana, Ginger, Grains of Paradise, Hibiscus, Lavender, Lovage, Melissa (Lemon Balm), Peppermint, Red Clover, Red Raspberry Leaves, Rose Hips, Rose Petals.
2. Place the ingredients in a bowl and make an infusion (a tea) by pouring boiling water over them.
3. Steep for nine minutes.
4. Strain the solid materials out. Allow the potion to cool and drink or share.

Saint of the Day

SAINT GUINEFORT

Can a dog be a saint? Technically speaking, saints are defined as human beings who, having died, do not entirely depart this Earthly plane but continue to assist the living via communication and miracles. In other words, saints, unlike other kinds of spiritual beings, once lived as human beings. Of course, there's always an exception: Guinefort is a greyhound saint, the very best boy of all.

According to legend, a baby in thirteenth-century France was left in the care

of the family hound while his parents, a knight and his lady, were away. In their absence, the faithful dog killed a snake menacing the baby. The snake bled profusely; both dog and baby were left covered with blood. When *Mère* and *Père* returned home, they saw their bloody baby and the dog's jowls covered in blood and jumped to conclusions. In the heat of the moment, Guinefort was slain and thrown down a well. Only then did they take a closer look at the baby, who was alive and well. Once the corpse of the snake was discovered, the parents understood all and were gutted with remorse. Filled with guilt, the parents gave Guinefort a proper burial.

Local peasants perceived that Guinefort had died unjustly and essentially had been martyred. They began venerating him as a saint, and Guinefort reciprocated, performing miracles. Word spread, and veneration of Guinefort, the dog saint, spread through France. Needless to say, a canine saint was extremely controversial. Vatican attempts to suppress veneration of Guinefort were never successful. A master healer, Guinefort's specialty is the protection of children. Today is his feast. Give him offerings that would appeal to a dog. Efforts on behalf of canines should also be appreciated, as are shrines in his honor.

August 23

The Nemesis, Festival of Nemesis

Nemesis is the goddess of justice, righteous anger, and justified revenge. The Nemesis is her annual feast. If you have been wronged and justice is not forthcoming or if you seek her attention, today is the ideal time to contact her. Her sacred symbol is the Wheel of Fortune, a reminder that what goes around comes around and that those unjustly at the top of the wheel may find themselves on the bottom, and vice versa. Nemesis is committed to upholding natural law and punishing those who disregard or flout it. She is also a personal goddess, whose protection may be sought. In return, devotees are expected to live honorably. Nemesis' sacred creature is the griffin, and she may manifest in that form. However, she typically resembles an angel, appearing as a winged woman garbed in white.

The Volcanalia, a Feast of Vulcan

Vulcan, Roman Lord of Fire, extinguishes, causes, and controls flames. His fires devour and destroy all, but also warm and comfort, providing safety and the ability to cook. The word “volcano” derives from his name. The Volcanalia is his primary feast, held during the height of summer, when fires were feared. The Romans sought Vulcan’s protection on their granaries and crops. However, Vulcan is invoked for protection from any kind of fire.

Practitioners of candle magic may wish to seek his aid. The day is traditionally celebrated with bonfires. Modern celebrations might also feature barbecues and grilling. It’s also traditional to light candles, as tribute to Vulcan. Remember to always be respectful of this volatile deity and to always pay close attention to fire safety. Even if under his protection, it’s best to be careful.



August 24

Mundus Patet

The name of this festival, “Mundus Patet,” may be literally translated as “the earth is open.” On this day in ancient Rome, the portal to Hades was opened. This wasn’t intended merely as an abstract concept. The ancients marked actual physical thresholds between the realms of the living and the dead. An entrance to Hades, within the Forum, was covered by the *lapis manalis*, literally the Stone of the Manes. Three times a year, this stone (the *lapis*) was lifted, enabling the Manes, souls of the dead, to roam freely: today, October 5, and November 8. Ostensibly ancestors returning home, the Manes were initially perceived as the benevolent dead, but over time they became more ominous and threatening.

Today is sometimes described as Roman Halloween, but it wasn’t a fun day for them, rather one of dreaded obligation. Today was considered dangerous.

Weddings were discouraged, as were celebrations. Instead the Manes and their supervisor, the goddess Mania (see [below](#)), were propitiated. Traditional offerings for the Manes—eggs, beans, bread, honey, milk, wine, and roses—remain appropriate.

The fig hand is the sign of resilient life and, as such, also protects against ghosts. The Romans protected themselves from the Manes with it. Should you fear the presence of ghosts, make the gesture and thrust it in the direction where danger lies. See [February 15](#) for more information about the fig hand.

Saint and Spirit of the Day

BARTHOLOMEW

Bartholomew, among the original apostles, a great healer, bears a reputation as a generous saint, thus historically many hospitals have been named in his honor. Today is his feast, but invoke him as needed.

Little is known of Bartholomew's life, but legends describe his violent death: flayed alive in either Armenia or Azerbaijan, then beheaded or crucified upside down. His votive imagery reflects that violence: he is typically portrayed holding his own flayed skin, only his face intact. His emblems include a butcher's knife and a tanner's knife. His color is red. Saint Bart is invoked to prevent violent deaths and danger. He protects against nightmares. Jesus described Bart as being without guile, and so he is requested to reveal truths—if you really want to know—which he will communicate in dreams. Bartholomew's healing specialties include neurological disorders and anything involving involuntary movement. He is the patron of those who wield knives, including butchers, surgeons, and tanners, and those seeking safe, successful surgery. Offer him sunflowers, red candles, and donations that benefit hospitals, hospices, or the ailing.

MANIA, MOTHER OF GHOSTS

The word “mania” derives from this goddess's name. Ruler of an Italian afterlife realm, Mania is the leader, supervisor, and guardian of a host of dead souls known as the Manes. Today is her feast. Mania is a masked goddess, rarely showing her face. She communicates in dreams. Both feared and needed, the Romans relied on her for protection from the malevolent dead. Her power radiates from the amulet called the fig hand. It may be worn in her honor. Traditional offerings to her include garlic and poppies. The Romans hung effigies of Mania over their front doors to serve as protective devices. These

doll-like images were offered to her today and replaced with new ones. Some scholars believe that modern images of Befana, Italy's Christmas witch, derive from this tradition.

When Pagan religions were banished, Mania lost her original *raison d'être*, but she did not depart, nor was she abandoned. Mania transformed into a feared witch goddess, who haunts the night, leading hosts of ghosts. Mania may still be invoked to banish ghosts and may be benevolent toward witches and modern devotees. Conventional Italian folklore, however, blames Mania for chronic nightmares and persistent manias.

August 25

Saint and Spirit of the Day

AGASOU, THE LEOPARD KING

In Dahomey, leopards symbolize magic power and shamanism, but especially royalty. Agasou may be a deified King of Dahomey or he may be a leopard spirit originally venerated by the Gedeve people, who inhabited the region before it was Dahomey, and then subsequently adopted by Dahomean royalty. In Haiti, he is venerated as the Vodou lwa of ancestral traditions and the family.

Agasou manifests as a man or a leopard. Even when in human form, some sort of leopard reference will likely identify him, whether leopard-print fabric or an actual companion animal. His other sacred creature is a crab, and it's traditional for Agasou's devotees to refrain from eating this crustacean. Agasou is a king, and so what kind of a saint would he be identified with, other than another king? Agasou is syncretized to King Saint Louis, and he shares today's feast. Images of Saint Louis may be used to represent Agasou, as can images of leopards.. Please see [June 19](#) for information regarding his further evolution in New Orleans. Agasou's consort is Silibo Vavou, and he is closely affiliated with Lord Agwé, Vodou's Commander of the Seas. He expects offerings fit for a king.

KING SAINT LOUIS

The only French monarch to be canonized, King Louis IX (April 25, 1214–August 25, 1270) participated in the Seventh and Eighth Crusades. A healer, Saint Louis is invoked to protect and cure terminally ill children. He is also traditionally requested to bless new endeavors, projects, and journeys. The city

of Saint Louis is named in his honor, and he may be considered its guardian. Louis is requested to assist those with marital difficulties or those who are struggling with the economic challenges of large families. He is the patron saint of soldiers, stonecutters, sculptors, construction workers, and hairdressers. Offer him French wine, frankincense, and candles, as well as your own decorative needlework.

August 26

Saint and Spirit of the Night

THE BLACK MADONNA OF CZĘSTOCHOWA

The most famous of all modern Black Madonnas, she is venerated in the form of a miraculous icon, enshrined in the Basilica of Jasna Gora, near Częstochowa, Poland.

The painting depicts a beautiful, dark-skinned woman accompanied by a young child. Her face is scarred, not part of the original icon, but as a result of an attack by Hussites in 1439, who sought unsuccessfully to destroy the icon. Allegedly, the marks on her cheeks left by a sabre cannot be repaired. Instead they always reappear, regardless of efforts. They are now considered an integral part of the icon. Reproductions of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa frequently lighten her skin and lessen the severity of her scars. Spontaneous healings are reported in response to contact with the icon. The Black Madonna of Częstochowa can reputedly provide any miracle. Today is her feast. Traditional offerings include pilgrimages to her shrine or lighting candles before her image.

EZILI DANTOR

Polish soldiers, sent to Haiti to help quell its revolution, carried images of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa with them. (Many were so appalled by the slavery they witnessed that they changed sides.) When Haitians saw the dark-skinned Madonna with her facial scars, they recognized the essence of the lwa Ezili Dantor. The image is now used to represent her, and Ezili shares the Black Madonna's feast. Dantor is Ezili Freda Dahomey's sister. While Ezili Freda weeps in the face of the world's inadequacies and ugliness, Dantor rages instead. The two sisters, the most prominent of the Ezili spirits, do not get along and

should not be venerated together, especially by the uninitiated. Ezili Freda is credited with inflicting the scars on Dantor's face, while Dantor is considered responsible for the knife plunged into Ezili Freda's heart. (Ezili Freda is represented by images of Mary surrounded by jewels and with her heart pierced by knives or swords.)

Two figures appear in the icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, mother and child. Although conventional wisdom interprets the child as Jesus, when Vodouistes saw the image, they recognized the child as Anaïs, Dantor's beloved daughter. The two may be venerated together. Anaïs serves as her mother's translator and may be requested to calm Ezili Dantor, should her rage become overwhelming.

Ezili Dantor is a guardian of women, especially single mothers, who may request any kind of help from her. She is also the matron goddess of lesbians, female soldiers, and entrepreneurial women, as well as stroke victims of all genders. Her colors are red and blue. Her sacred creature is the Haitian black pig. Offer her Barbancourt rum, corn products, corn sprinkled with gunpowder, honey sprinkled with cinnamon, cigarettes, knives, and daggers.

August 27

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT FANOURIOS

Fanourios may or may not be the same saint as Expedite. Some insist that the two are distinct beings, while others comprehend Fanourios as a Byzantine version of Expedite. (See [April 19](#) for details of Expedite.) Fanourios means "revealer" and is etymologically related to "epiphany." He is traditionally portrayed holding a cross in one hand and a lit candle in the other, typically a long white taper, though variations exist. Sometimes he holds a spear in one hand with a lit candle atop the cross held in his other hand. Occasionally he holds his ritual cake, the *fanouropita*, and the candles are on the cake, so that it resembles a birthday cake.

Fanourios is associated with bold, decisive action, as opposed to the speed with which Expedite is associated. Like Saint Anthony, Fanourios' saintly specialty is locating (revealing!) what's been lost. Like Expedite, Fanourios has a predilection for cake, specifically the *fanouropita*, a ritual cake to find lost

things.

Fanouropita: A Cake for Lost Things

This cake may be made whenever Fanourios' help is sought, but it's traditional to bake it today, purely as tribute. Fanourios is famous for recovering what can't be found. These might be lost items such as keys or documents, but Fanourios is also invoked to find missing people, jobs, true love, safety, elusive spiritual or career paths, or the even more ephemeral peace of mind. As with Saint Anthony (please see [June 13](#)), if it can be phrased in terms of finding, Fanourios can reveal it to you.

While Anthony responds to a summoning rhyme, Fanourios requires fanouropita as part of the process of requesting help. Having received the cake, the saint will then reputedly reveal the location of what you seek in your dreams. Luckily, this is an old rustic recipe that requires items probably already in your cupboards. It is easily baked, whenever needed.

The simplest, most authentic version of this vegan cake consists only of flour, cinnamon, olive oil, and sugar. No eggs or butter are required. Modern variations may include cloves, orange or lemon flavoring, walnuts, almonds, or raisins. The most traditional version, as portrayed on icons, is round, but the cake may also be made in loaf or Bundt pans. This is my recipe; please adapt to your own taste.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup ground almonds or walnuts, or a combination (If allergic to nuts or if they're not on hand, omit, but use 4 cups of all-purpose flour rather than 3.)

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground cloves

½ teaspoon baking powder

pinch of salt

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to grease the pan

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup brandy or other liqueur, ideally Metaxa Greek brandy

Zest from two large or three small oranges. Lemon zest may also be incorporated.

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ cup currants or golden raisins

Powdered sugar, for decoration

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Lightly grease the pan with a bit of olive oil.
3. To avoid the cake sticking, lightly dust the pan with a bit of flour, shaking out the excess.
4. Whisk the following together in a bowl: the flour, ground nuts, sugar, cinnamon, cloves, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
5. Combine the following in another bowl: olive oil, orange juice, brandy or other liquor, citrus zest, and vanilla extract.
6. Using a mixer, add the dry ingredients to the wet, mixing thoroughly.

7. Stir in the currants or raisins.
8. Pour into the pan, distributing the batter evenly.
9. Bake until a knife inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Amount of time varies depending on the type of pan you're using but should be approximately 35 minutes to under an hour.
10. Once the cake is done, remove it from the oven and allow it to cool. Once cooled, remove from the pan.
11. Powdered sugar may be used to decorate the cake. Stencils are frequently used so that shapes associated with Fanourios are revealed—a cross or a taper candle, typically.

Festival of the Nativity of Isis

This festival celebrates the birth of Isis. Although the goddess derives from Egypt, the date is from the Roman liturgical calendar. Please see [March 5](#) for more details of this goddess.



August 28

Festival of the Nativity of Nephthys

Nephthys, Lady of Death that Is Not Eternal and Mistress of the West, is the youngest of Egypt's sacred quadruplets. Her siblings are Isis, Osiris, and Set. A quiet, shadowy spirit in comparison to her flamboyant siblings, Nephthys is a powerful goddess with dominion over darkness, magic, sorcery, witchcraft, death, decay, and immortality. Although an Egyptian goddess, today's feast is based on the Roman calendar, following her sister's nativity by one day. (Although the deities are quadruplets, time works differently in sacred realms and dimensions, thus they do not share the same birthdate. Some versions of the

myth describe quintuplets including Horus the Elder.)

Nephthys is the biological mother of Anubis. (Isis is his adoptive mother.) The two sisters are constant companions. Nephthys accompanies Isis on her quests to locate and resuscitate Osiris. The two are frequently depicted together in ritual art. However, Nephthys is also an independent goddess who guards the thresholds between life and death, as well as those between fertility and sterility. Nephthys may be petitioned for fertility, especially by those who have been told they will never conceive. Nephthys' colors are red and black. Her symbol is the skull and crossbones. Vultures, crows, and snakes serve as Nephthys' messengers. She is among the dark moon goddesses, and if tonight coincides with the dark moon phase, any spells cast in the dark are potentially extra potent.

August 29

John the Baptist was killed as a political prisoner, not a religious martyr. (See [June 23](#) and [24](#) for details.) Tomorrow is the International Day of the Disappeared, dedicated to those who, like John, have been removed in order to silence, erase, or exploit them. If this strikes a chord with you, today is an excellent opportunity to research and plan activities for tomorrow.

While not as magically powerful as Saint John's Eve on June 23, today still carries John's energy, and he is the saint of magical plants. Harvest or gather botanicals today, reserving for future use.

The Decollation (Beheading) of John the Baptist

Unusually for a saint, John the Baptist's primary feast on June 24 is not timed to coincide with his death, as is usual. Compared to June's festivities, today, known as the Decollation—meaning “beheading”—is a low-key festivity.

John is a great healer, who may be invoked to heal any ailment. However, it's the image of his severed head that is specifically used to heal headaches and migraines. It's not necessary to be a devotee. This morbid ritual emerged in the

medieval era and may be done at any time. However, today is considered the ideal time, even if you are currently feeling fine.

1. Find an image of John the Baptist's severed head that resonates with you. An extremely popular art motif, there are many paintings and icons to choose from. The key to this ritual is that the image is of John's severed *head*. Paintings of the living saint are not suitable.
2. Position the image so that you can gaze at it comfortably for a lengthy period.
3. Contemplate the image. That's it. Clear other thoughts from your mind and gaze at John's head meditatively. Allegedly, this simple ritual magically prevents and heals even the most severe migraines.

Spirit of the Day

HATHOR

Egypt's primordial goddess of joy, Hathor is known as the Great One of Many Names. A goddess of birth and death, she has dominion over females of all species, sex, pleasure, music, magic, dance, perfume, and intoxicants. As the Lady of the West, she rules the territory of the ancient Egyptian afterlife realms. Although there are deities of the dead, notably Osiris and Anubis, without Hathor's protection and cooperation, the dead cannot reach their next home or achieve immortality.

To honor Hathor, drink, dance, make love, sing, or attend the theater. Engage in rites of pleasure. Incorporate the sistrum, an ancient Egyptian percussion instrument, into rituals. Ideally, shake a sistrum bearing the image of Hathor, as many do. The essence of Hathor is present in henna—today is an excellent time to obtain or give henna tattoos. Hathor is the matron goddess of women, perfumers, aromatherapists, musicians, singers, dancers, magicians, diviners, fortune-tellers, brewers, vintners, and cosmeticians, especially those exploring the sacred and ritual aspects of makeup. The possibilities for today are endless: give or receive an aromatic massage, have your fortune told or consult a diviner, tour a winery, explore Egyptian cuisine or mythology.

August 30

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

International Day of the Disappeared

Observed since 2011, this annual commemoration is intended to draw attention to those who have vanished and whose whereabouts are unknown to their loved ones and legal representatives. The date is dedicated to locating individuals and restoring their rights. Initially inspired by organizations seeking to locate those who have been “disappeared” in Latin America, the date is now acknowledged worldwide. Although specifically intended to draw attention to political prisoners, people go missing for a multitude of reasons and they, too, fall under the umbrella of today’s concerns.

If you seek help or wish to offer it, organizations and websites offer specific political and legal recommendations. For those inclined to seek spiritual solutions, Saints Anthony of Padua, Andrew, Cyprian, and Fanourios are masters of locating the lost, as is Jewish sage Meir Ba’al Haness. Saint Helena is renowned for unearthing missing treasure including treasured people.

August 31

Saint of the Day

RAYMOND NONNATUS

Nonnatus means “not born” and reflects that Saint Raymond (1204–August 31, 1246) was born by Caesarian section after his mother’s death during childbirth.

Raymond was brutally silenced by having a padlock inserted through his lips, although he survived. Padlocks and keys are now his emblems. Raymond is the patron saint of the enslaved, the imprisoned, and the falsely accused, as well as midwives and obstetricians. Raymond may be invoked for anything, but he has two specialties: shutting people’s mouths and facilitating births, especially difficult ones. Request his help if survival of mother or baby are in doubt. Saint Raymond Nonnatus is invoked against false witness, false testimony, gossip, slander, and defamatory speech. Today is his feast.

From My Mouth to Your Mouth: Saint Raymond Shut Someone’s Mouth Spell

The power of Raymond Nonnatus is incorporated into a spell intended to prevent gossip or slander. It requires chewing gum, a coin, a red candle, and an image of Saint Raymond, preferably a statue, but any image, including one copied from the internet, will do.

1. Place the gum in your mouth and start chewing.
2. Hold the image of Saint Raymond in your hands. Look him in the eye and tell him what you need. Describe your situation. What needs to be fixed or changed? Are you afraid of gossip? Is someone already gossiping about you? Is there only one perpetrator or a whole group? Keep the gum in your mouth, chewing periodically, while you unburden your heart to Raymond. If you can't chew gum and speak at the same time, communicate with Raymond silently.
3. When you're ready, place the coin over Raymond's mouth and seal it there with the gum from your mouth.
4. Keep Raymond's mouth sealed until you are absolutely 100 percent sure that the gossip has been terminated and will not begin again. You may then remove the gum, releasing the coin.
5. Raymond has earned this coin: it's his. Keep it on his altar or donate it to a cause he would like. Increase the amount as you deem appropriate.



September

The name of this month derives from the Latin *septem* meaning “seven,” reflecting that this was once the seventh month of the old Roman calendar, although it is now our ninth. Nine months is the human gestation period—the expected length of a pregnancy, and so “ninth month” bears a certain metaphorical resonance.

September 1 marks the start of meteorological autumn in the northern hemisphere and meteorological spring in the southern, but for many it's the equinox later this month that signifies the changing of seasons. September contains one of the two annual equinoxes—dates when day and night are of (approximately) equal duration. In the northern hemisphere, birthplace of our Gregorian calendar, this is the autumnal equinox, ushering in the season of darkness as nights grow progressively longer. This equinox is the gateway to the extremely magically powerful months that follow (October, November, December), and so September's comparative lack of magical superpower days may be considered a respite: an excellent time to recoup, rejuvenate, and prepare for what's ahead. Spells devoted to health, cleansing, and protection are in order.

Although May is technically “the month of Mary,” September, especially Virgo season, contains numerous feasts honoring this Blessed Mother. By extension, those sacred beings associated with her, such as Yemaya, Oshun, and Ezili, are also celebrated, as are some ancient goddesses whose veneration was transferred to Mary. Although dates do not correspond precisely with our calendar, the ancient and multiday Mysteries of Eleusis once began in what is now September, dedicated to goddesses Demeter, Persephone, Baubo, and Hekate.

Angels of September: Uriel or Zuriel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Virgo and Libra

Bird of the Month: hawk

Birthstones of the Month: chrysolite, sapphire

Flowers of the Month: aster, forget-me-not, morning glory

September's Holidays and Extra Power Days

The **equinox**, while not a fixed date, generally occurs around the 21st of the month. Some schedule annual rituals on this date for consistency's sake.

Feasts of Saint Cyprian, Justina, and the Sacred Twins: September 26

Michaelmas, the feast of Michael Archangel: September 29

Moveable Feasts

Equinox: the second equinox of the calendar year occurs. (See "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#).")

Mabon: a Wiccan sabbat coinciding with the autumnal equinox. (See "[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#).")

World Goddess Day: celebrated annually on the first Sunday in September, a day to honor any and all goddesses.

September 1

"Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!"

See [January 1](#).

Saint and Spirit of the Day

SAINT GILES

Giles (c. 650–c. 710) desperately wished to be a hermit. Seeking the solitude of the forests in what is now southwest France, he moved deeper and deeper into the woods, until finally his only companion was a female deer who nourished him on her milk. According to legend, a royal hunting party pursued Giles' deer, who raced to the hermit for safety, hiding behind him. An arrow aimed at the deer hit Giles instead, wounding and crippling him. The deer remained safe and the king was so impressed with Giles that he gave him some land and sponsored what is now the Abbey of Saint-Gilles (French spelling), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Giles initially dedicated the site to Saints Peter and Paul, but after his canonization, it was renamed in his honor.

Giles is invoked against madness, night terrors, seizure disorders, infertility,

and illness. He is the patron saint of lactating women and wet nurses—he may be invoked for any breastfeeding issues—as well as the disabled, blacksmiths, outcasts, and those who fear darkness or night. Giles is among the most magical saints. Among the folk names of his flower, Saint Giles' orpine (*Hylotelephium telephium*), is witches' moneybags. Today is his feast. If Giles resonates with you, it is the perfect time for appeals and petitions to this saint. Decorate his altars with images of deer as well as Peter and Paul. Donations on behalf of the well-being of deer or to organizations that promote breastfeeding, like La Leche League, are appropriate.

JUNO REGINA

Today marks the beginning of Rome's love affair with Juno, their number one goddess, as it commemorates a vow made on September 1, 396 BCE by Marcus Furius Camillus, known as the Second Founder of Rome. Unable to defeat the Etruscan city of Veii, he bribed Juno, their goddess, by offering her a grander temple in Rome if only she'd defect to their side—or at least that's the excuse he gave for stealing Veii's statue of Juno. His strategy worked. The Romans conquered the Etruscans, and Camillus fulfilled his vow, dedicating her Roman temple on this day in 392 BCE.

It is an excellent day to initiate relationships with Juno or to create or clean altars. For more information about this great goddess, please see the entry for [June 1](#). See [September 12](#) for a spell named in her honor.

September 2

Cleopatra Love Powder

On this, the anniversary of the decisive Battle of Actium in which Cleopatra attempted to preserve Egypt's independence from Rome, consider a spell that evokes her legendary powers. This magical formula's two ingredients—peppermint and roses—are both widely considered aphrodisiacs. Cleopatra reputedly seduced Mark Antony in a room in which rose petals were strewn knee-deep.

1. Using a mortar and pestle, grind peppermint leaves and red rose petals into a fine powder. If you plan to apply this to your body or sheets, be sure to

use organically grown, pesticide-free botanicals. The proportion is up to you: I recommend three parts roses to one part peppermint. Peppermint is potentially “tingly”—if you don’t like the sensation, decrease the quantity.

2. Sprinkle the powder into envelopes containing love notes or into your lover’s shoes. Sprinkle it on sheets or use it to create a path to a lover’s bower. For use as dusting powder, add it to cornstarch or rice flour and sift before using.

September 3

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Three Ingredient Protection Powder

Three of the most potent magical protectors masquerade as mundane household items: garlic, rosemary, and salt. Grind them together in a mortar and pestle.

- Garlic powder and dried rosemary are less pungent and thus more discreet than garlic cloves and fresh rosemary.
- They may also be ground into a fine powder. If using fresh material, grinding is more likely to create a paste.
- If ghosts are what you fear, rather than danger emanating from the living, the paste may be more effective.
- Any type of salt may be used, including plain old table salt.
- There’s no substitute for garlic and salt, but essential oil of rosemary may be used instead of the herb. In that case, grind the salt and garlic together first. When you’re happy with the result, add the essential oil, one drop at a time, until the scent pleases you.



September 4

Psychic Dream Blend

Add the following essential oils to an aroma diffuser: bay laurel, cedarwood, and storax plus a drop of rose attar or rose geranium. (The consistency of storax may clog some diffusers. Simple open ones incorporating tea lights may be better than sophisticated electric diffusers.) Position the diffuser so that the scent wafts over the sleeping area. Less may be more: storax and cedarwood have potent smells. It's important to have a light hand, or the aroma may disturb your sleep, contradicting the spell's purpose of encouraging prophetic dreams.

Saints of the Day

The names of today's saints evoke the power of the mystic rose.

ROSALIA

Born in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily in 1130 and a direct descendant of Charlemagne, Rosalia was expected to live a luxurious, upper-class life. Instead, she ran away from home when she was a young teenager to live the life of a hermit on Monte Pellegrino, near Palermo. Servants were sent to bring her home, but with the help of two angels, she eluded them. Eventually the angels led her to a cave, where she spent the rest of her life, dying circa 1166. By 1237, churches were dedicated to her, but that's just the beginning of her story. Rosalia rose to saintly superstardom centuries later.

In 1624, with Palermo besieged by the bubonic plague, Rosalia manifested in visions, where she revealed the location of her skeleton and advised that, if brought back to Palermo, she would end the epidemic. She demanded to be brought back to Palermo in a sacred procession. Hunters followed her directions. Climbing Monte Pellegrino, they entered a cave, and found her skeleton beside a rock with the name "Rosalia" carved on it where she said it would be. They obeyed instructions: just as the procession ended, so did the plague. Rosalia is now the matron saint of Palermo. Devotees claim that she delivers whatever is asked of her; however, healing remains her specialty, especially of contagious

diseases. Today is her primary feast. Envisioned wearing a crown of roses and carrying a hermit's staff, Rosalia's favored colors are white and blue. Roses are her traditional offering.

ROSE OF VITERBO

Devoutly religious since childhood, Rose (c. 1233–March 6, 1251), known as “the little rose of Viterbo” was a street preacher by age twelve. She preached about politics and shared her prophecies including the imminent death of Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor, who, in fact, died within days of Rose's proclamation. Rose was acclaimed as a miracle worker while yet alive and as a saint immediately after. Envisioned as a young woman crowned with roses, Rose carries a crucifix, unlike Rosalia's hermit's staff. Rose is the matron saint of exiles, especially political ones, florists, and flower growers, professional and otherwise. Today is her feast. Light white candles for her and offer roses.

September 5

Ease Your Wrath Powder

Do you have an enemy? Are you the target of someone's rage? Would you like to make peace with someone who is angry at you? This traditional magical formula is intended to ease someone's wrath toward you. It may be used in all kinds of circumstances, but as there is a romantic component, it's frequently considered a reconciliation powder.

1. Write the desired outcome of the spell on a small piece of paper in the present tense and as specifically as possible. For example, “Jane Doe loves me again” or “John Doe forgives me.”
2. Burn the paper, saving the ashes.
3. Blend pink or white rose petals, sandalwood powder, and sweet Hungarian paprika together in a mortar and pestle, grinding them into a fine powder. As you grind, chant the phrase that was on the paper. Focus on visualizing the successful outcome of your spell.
4. Add the ashes to the powder and grind some more.

5. Add six drops of attar of jasmine or roses and allow the powder to dry completely.
6. Discreetly sprinkle the powder, so that the target of your spell will step on it, over it, or sit on it. If you have access, you may also discreetly sprinkle it into their shoes.
7. If this is a reconciliation spell, it may be sprinkled directly on the target or on sheets, providing that it is safe for you to do so. (Remember, a spell is always supposed to improve your life, not endanger it.) Allegedly, they will love you again.

September 6

Bibliomancy

Celebrate National Read a Book Day with some bibliomancy. Bibliomancy means “divination by book.” *Any* book can serve as an oracle, including this one. The Bible is the most common book used in bibliomancy, but Homer’s *Odyssey* and Shakespearian anthologies are also popular. In a pinch, however, any book will do. Here’s the basic technique:

1. Formulate your question—what is it that you seek to know?
2. Close your eyes and flip the book open randomly.
3. With your eyes still closed, put your finger on the book. (Some prefer to stick a pin into the book for precision.)
4. Open your eyes and read the randomly selected word, sentence, verse, or passage. There’s your oracle—a response to your query.
5. Oracles may be crystal clear, ambiguous, or confusing. If you don’t understand the oracle, don’t just do it again, although you can repeat for clarification. Instead ponder the message and seek to interpret it.

September 7

Ocean Mother Cleansing Bath

This cleansing ritual may be dedicated to the orisha Yemaya, for whom today is a holy day. Add copious quantities of sea salt to a tub filled with water. The temperature should be whatever is most comfortable. This is sufficient for magical cleansing, but the spell may be empowered by any of the following:

- Color the water blue, whether with a color bath, such as those sold by the Kneipp company, or with a little food coloring. It's Yemaya's sacred hue.
- Add a splash of Notre Dame Water, which contains white roses, also sacred to Yemaya. See [April 28](#) for the recipe.
- Add quartz crystals to the bath, large enough not to go down the drain. (Be sure your crystals won't be damaged by salt or water.)
- Add organically grown, pesticide-free white rose petals to the bath. (If they're not organic, any chemicals or pesticides clinging to the roses will leach into the bath, potentially a health hazard.)
- Repeat Psalms, affirmations, or prayers stating the goal of your ritual, if you have one, such as "I am cleansed of all that defiles me."
- Incorporate petitions and pleas to Yemaya, Queen of the Sea, or toward any sacred beings whose blessings and help are sought.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

THE BLACK MADONNA OF REGLA

Today's feast honors Spain's Black Madonna of Regla. Tomorrow is officially her primary feast, but vigils are held for her tonight and many celebrate all day. As with so many Black Madonnas, this statue is not in keeping with conventional Marian imagery. Instead, it resembles Phoenician statues, and legend says that the statue was created in fourth-century Carthage, the Phoenician heartland, and only later brought to Spain by disciples of Saint Augustine. It may originally have portrayed the goddess Tanit.

Hidden from the Moors in the eighth century, her location was lost until 1330, when a priest experienced a visionary dream that showed him where to find her. Regardless of original identity, in fourteenth-century Spain she was assumed to be Mary. The Black Madonna of Regla resides in her shrine in Chipiona, dedicated to her in 1399. A chapel marks the spot where she was

unearthed. Miracles associated with the Black Madonna of Regla include liberating prisoners, healing infertility, and rescuing people from drowning, shipwrecks, and wells, but she's believed capable of producing any miracle.

Because Yemaya, Queen of the Sea, may be represented by the Black Madonna of Regla, today is her feast day, too. See [January 1](#) for more information about this beloved orisha.

TANIT, QUEEN OF THE STARS

Tanit, the Serpent Lady, supreme goddess of Carthage, located near modern Tunis, is a goddess of the moon and stars. Modern devotees include astrologers, stargazers, moon-gazers, and crystal ball gazers. A goddess of fertility, creativity, and bounty, the seafaring Phoenicians spread her veneration wherever they settled, including Malta, Sardinia, and Spain. When the Romans conquered Carthage, they salted the city, banned indigenous worship, and transplanted Roman people and deities there. They identified Tanit as Juno Caelestis, transferring worship to her. Reports indicate that vestigial pockets of Tanit worship survived in North Africa's mountains.

Offer Tanit her symbols: figs, pomegranates, and stalks of wheat. Her sacred creatures include doves, dolphins, and snakes. The *hamsa*, the hand-shaped Semitic amulet, also called the Hand of Fatima or the Hand of Miriam, may have once been the Hand of Tanit. Decorate her altars with them, as well as celestial imagery of stars and planets.

September 8

The Nativity of Mary

This celebration of Mary's birth ranks among the most important Marian feast days.

Believed capable of producing any miracle, today is an ideal time to seek blessings or to honor her for those received. Her colors are traditionally blue and white. She is associated with numerous flowers, but especially roses. Many churches are at full capacity today. Local traditions may include public processions, parades, and fairs.

THE LADY OF THE GRAPE HARVEST

In France, winegrowers celebrate Mary today in her capacity as Lady of the Grape Harvest. The harvest's grapes are blessed in churches. Grapes are attached to images of Mary or preserved to serve as talismans. Place a statue of Mary among the vines and request her blessings. Grapes and wine are incorporated into meals today. It's traditional to create dolls from wheat stalks today, perhaps embellished by grape leaves and vines. The dolls preside over tables during the feasting and are burned afterward. As that tradition suggests, this festival of the grape harvest predates Christianity and retains Pagan elements. If there is another sacred being that you perceive as guardian of your vineyard, harvest, or grapes, such as Dionysus or his bride Ariadne, today is a good date for offerings and appeasements, too.

LA CARIDAD DEL COBRE

Caridad is "charity" in Spanish. In Cuba, Our Lady of Charity is known as *la Caridad del Cobre*. Now the matron saint of Cuba and known affectionately as Cachita, *la Caridad del Cobre* is asked to save devotees from stormy seas. This may be meant literally but also refers to the metaphorical stormy seas of life and love. It's traditional to present offerings and appeals to her on little boats or rafts that are then set on the sea or rivers. Those without access to living waters may decorate an altar with marine imagery instead.

OSHUN

As the beautiful Yoruba orisha Oshun is syncretized to Our Lady of Charity, today is among her own most significant holidays. Oshun, among the most beloved spirits in the world, is the orisha of fresh water, wealth, love, romance, fertility, reproductive health, beauty, magic, and witchcraft. She has dominion over things that flow, such as water, money, honey, love, and mother's milk. The sweetest, youngest, and smallest of the orishas, she is also potentially the fiercest and most determined. Once angered, she is difficult to appease.

Oshun is frequently venerated alongside Yemaya, who may be her mother or sister, depending on myth. She has good relations with virtually all the orishas; exceptions are her fellow river spirits Oba and Oya. Oshun is present in the color spectrum ranging from yellow to orange to gold. Offer her items like marigolds, oranges, or pumpkins that reflect this palette. (Devotees frequently abstain from eating pumpkin, as well as yellow or orange squash, as these are perceived as belonging to her.) In Yorubaland, her metal is traditionally brass; however, this has greater spiritual value there than in the Western Hemisphere, where she has become associated with copper and gold. (Cuba's *Caridad del Cobre* is

associated with copper mines.) Oshun's number is 5 and her sacred creatures include peacocks, crocodiles, parrots, vultures, leopards, and river fish such as catfish.

Oshun is envisioned as a dazzlingly beautiful woman or mermaid. She may be portrayed as heavily pregnant, emphasizing her creative potential and that she can deliver whatever is needed. She wears five bracelets and carries a hand mirror with which she can admire herself but that also serves as a divining tool. Oshun is the mother of witchcraft and an accomplished sorceress. An ever-victorious warrior, in her guise as the Buzzard Mother, Oshun epitomizes the swamp witch.

The simplest offering to Oshun is spring water and honey. You *must* taste the honey offered to Oshun each and every time it is offered to her. Legend says that this is because an attempt was once made to murder her using poisoned honey, and so she is now suspicious, but there is also a sacramental aspect: Oshun is believed to be literally present in honey, so by tasting it you absorb her sweetness. Oshun is also present in cinnamon, which may be sprinkled onto her honey. Give her yellow flowers, especially yellow roses. Offerings may be made at home or on a personal altar, but may also be taken to a river, stream, waterfall, or other source of fresh water and given to her by placing into the water.

For an elaborate offering, give Oshun spring water in a champagne flute and a dish of fine honey (remember to taste it), sprinkled with ground cinnamon. Light five yellow, orange, or golden candles for her and offer either five yellow roses or five bouquets of yellow or orange flowers.

Oshun Financial S.O.S.

Her mythos recounts that Oshun, unlike so many other spirits, experienced a period of extreme poverty. Because of this, she comprehends the value of money and is sympathetic to the financial needs of devotees. To request her assistance, first set up an altar for her, whether simple or elaborate. You will also need a small cinnamon bun.

1. Add honey (taste it!) to a dish of milk and blend them together.
2. Put the bun into the dish, turning it so that it absorbs the honeyed milk.
3. Make a hole in the center of the bun, big enough to insert a small yellow, gold, or orange candle.
 - If the candle is big and sturdy enough to do so without breaking it, carve your identifying information into its wax (name, birthdate, any appropriate sigils), along with the amount of money sought, if there is

a specific amount.

- If the candle is not big enough or too fragile or you're uncomfortable carving it, then write the information on a small piece of paper. Dab the paper with citrus-scented perfume and place it beneath the bun.
4. Insert the candle into the bun and burn it. Praise and invoke Oshun as it burns.

September 9

Today is the ninth day of the ninth month of the year. Nine is counted among the most magical numbers. However, depending on tradition, it may be an extremely lucky number—or not. European and Semitic-based magical systems usually perceive 9 positively. East Asian systems tend to consider it unstable and potentially dangerous. In either case, 9 is considered exceptionally powerful, and today is double 9. Twice 9 equals 18, which in Jewish cosmology is the luckiest number, signifying “life.”

Spirits associated with the number 9 include Aganyu, Astarte, Ban Naomha, Brigid, Madame Brigitte, the Norse Nine Wave Sisters, Oya, and East Asia's nine-tailed fox spirits. Celebrate, explore, or research them today.

It is an excellent time to begin a nine-day candle ritual either by burning a nine-day candle (designed to last for nine days, although this is not guaranteed; they may burn faster or slower) or by burning a single small candle daily for nine days.

Nine Knot Spell

Knots are believed capable of holding or containing magical energy. Creating knots is among the most primordial magical acts. Witches and sailors were believed capable of tying winds into knotted ropes, whether to save a ship or to sink it.

Knot magic may be incorporated into your daily routine: focus on your goal or desire, articulating it in the present tense, whenever you find yourself tying knots in thread, shoelaces, apron strings, rope, or whatever. (Example: while tying a child's shoelace, think “You are safe!” as you pull the knot tight.) The following is an extremely traditional knot spell, usually cast with a red silk cord,

but if you prefer another color or material, tweak as needed or desired. Before you begin, center yourself, focus your mind, and concentrate on your goal.

1. Repeat the following incantation, tying a knot each time it is directed, for a total of nine knots:

By knot of one, my spell's begun!
By knot of two, my spell comes true
By knot of three, so it shall be
By knot of four, this spell, I store.
By knot of five, my magic is alive
By knot of six, my goal is fixed
By knot of seven, this spell I leaven
By knot of eight, I seal the fate
By knot of nine, success is mine!

2. Once complete, immediately store your knotted cord in a safe, private place, where no one will take it or undo the knots.
3. Should you ever change your mind about the goal of your spell, unknot one or more cords, working backward, so that you begin with the last knot tied.

Festival of the Double Ninth or the Double Yang Festival

The Chinese concept of yin and yang suggests that the world is created from inseparable but opposing energies. For healthy, harmonious living, these energies must be in balance. Yin forces include the female principle, water, moisture, cold, darkness, the moon, and silence, while yang forces include the male principle, dryness, heat, light, the sun, and noise. The I-Ching (*Book of Changes*) categorizes the number 9 as a yang number. Thus, the ninth day of the ninth month is a double yang day. This is potentially too much or excessive yang, which may lead to volatile and dangerous situations. Thus, this festival's ancient focus was to restore balance and prevent or minimize danger.

Of course, this festival derives from the *Chinese* calendar—the ninth day of the ninth lunar month is celebrated throughout East Asia and elsewhere around the world. It has been adapted to the Western calendar in Japan (see [below](#)), and many perceive that the principles underlying the festival potentially apply to any calendar system.

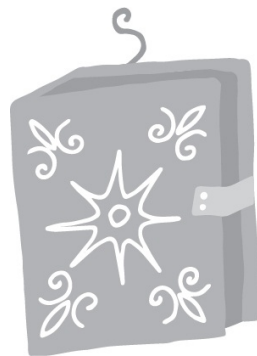
Traditional methods of cooling off all that yang include drinking chrysanthemum tea or wine and wearing or eating Japanese cornelian cherries

(*Cornus officinalis*). In Taiwan it's the day to fly kites, while in Korea it's a day to celebrate the elderly and raise awareness of their needs. The Festival of the Double Ninth is also a time to visit cemeteries (the abode of yin energy), cleaning the gravesites of ancestors or loved ones.

The Chrysanthemum Festival

This Japanese festival derives from the Chinese festival of the Double Ninth but occurs annually on September 9. While some still celebrate the Festival of the Double Ninth according to the lunar calendar, when Japan officially adopted the Gregorian calendar, today's holiday emerged and is honored at many Buddhist and Shinto shrines. Focus is on celebrating and encouraging longevity. Today, visit and care for elders, and drink chrysanthemum tea and eat chestnut rice.

Although not the case in East Asia, in parts of Europe chrysanthemums are perceived as funeral flowers. Receiving them or dreaming of them is considered a frightening omen. If chrysanthemums have negative associations for you, substitute something else with cooling properties, for example, mint tea, cucumbers, or yogurt.



September 10

Backward Candle Ghost Removal Spell

This spell was inspired by reports that the ghost of Beatrice Cenci, carrying her own severed head, appears annually tonight—the night preceding the anniversary of her execution—on Rome’s Sant’Angelo Bridge, the site of her beheading in 1599. The legend has become a tourist draw, and ideally the living and the dead coexist peacefully. Where this is not the case, spells and rituals like this one serve to banish ghosts. This spell benefits from another person accompanying and essentially spotting the spellcaster, making sure that they do not trip or fall, and perhaps replenishing the salt supply, if needed.

1. After dark, light a white candle.
2. Carry the candle in your right hand and clutch a handful of salt in your left. Put some extra salt in a pocket or someplace where you can grab it quickly, because once this ritual starts, there’s no retracing your steps.
3. Beginning at the bottom of a house and ending at the top, walk *backward* through each room, allowing the salt to trickle through your fingers.
4. As you walk, communicate with the ghosts—loudly or silently, as you prefer—telling them to get out. (No need to curse or provoke them. Just be firm and authoritative.)
5. When the uppermost and final part of the house is reached—the attic, for instance—and the ritual concluded, blow out the candle.



September 11

Saint of the Day

MYCHAL JUDGE, THE SAINT OF 9/11

Although not the first killed during the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, Father Mychal Judge’s body was the first to be identified, and so

he is officially “Victim 0001.” A Franciscan friar and Catholic priest, he was the New York City Fire Department’s chaplain. Father Mychal had a history of going above and beyond the official parameters of his position—visiting firefighters and their families in hospitals, attending funerals, and rushing to fires. In that capacity, he voluntarily rushed to the Towers that morning. As he raced toward the North Tower, New York’s then-mayor Rudy Giuliani called out to him, “Father Mike! Pray for us!” Judge responded, “I always do. I always pray for you.” These, his last publicly recorded words, have been interpreted by devotees as his vow to continually pray for his constituency, even from beyond the grave. Judge administered last rites to people lying in the streets before entering the North Tower. When orders were given to evacuate the building, Father Mike refused to abandon the firefighters still within. He reputedly died praying. A photo of five men carrying Mychal’s body from the wreckage is among the iconic images of 9/11.

Although there are attempts to begin the canonization process, Mychal Judge is an unofficial saint—one who is not canonized. Many believe he never will be, as he was not the most obedient Son of the Church. Although celibate, he did not hide his homosexual orientation from friends. When church officials urged a boycott of New York City’s first gay-inclusive Saint Patrick’s Day Parade, Father Mychal showed up in his friar’s garb, making sure to be interviewed and photographed by the media. He was open about his troubles with alcohol, telling President Bill Clinton that, in his opinion, the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous had done more good for humanity than Mother Teresa. In the early 1980s, Father Mike was among the first to counsel those suffering from AIDS, at a time when this illness carried a terrible stigma, presiding over funerals and counseling patients and families alike. Many considered him a saint while he was still alive. Holy cards of Father Judge are available. Today is his feast.

Father Mike’s constituency is vast, as he turned no one away. In addition to firefighters, police officers, law enforcement, first responders, and their families and loved ones, Father Mychal Judge is considered the patron of those affiliated with 9/11 and the World Trade Center, New Yorkers, alcoholics, recovering alcoholics, the poor, the oppressed, Franciscans preparing to make their vows, those who feel estranged from the Church, immigrants, those with AIDS or HIV, and the LGBTQ community.

Numerous memorials to him exist. Traditional offerings to Father Mychal include donations and good deeds on behalf of firefighters, law enforcement, and first responders, as well as flowers and candles, but do *not* offer him alcohol, as this is perceived as disrespectful. Give him a cup of coffee instead. He is associated with numerous healing miracles, especially during the neonatal state.

September 12

Juno Regina

This is the second September feast for Queen Juno. Please see [September 1](#) for details.

JUNO'S BREW

This is not an ancient Roman formula. Instead it's a modern cleansing spell reputedly based on Greek magical traditions. It allegedly banishes ghosts and low-level entities.

1. Pour boiling water over a half cup of dried vervain or one cup of fresh vervain.
2. Let this steep for eleven minutes, creating an infusion, before straining.
3. Add the liquid to a bucket of wash water.
4. Add vinegar. (Other materials such as salt or Florida Water may also be added, but they may damage surfaces. If you're unsure, adding vinegar is sufficient.)
5. Use this to wash floors and walls, concentrating on thresholds, windowsills, and any area that you fear is vulnerable or haunted.
6. As you cleanse, repeat affirmations such as "I am the queen of this space" with the focus on your right to determine who has residence in the space or not.
7. Dispose of the wash water outside your home or by flushing it down the toilet. Ideally, keep windows and doors open for thirty minutes after cleansing.

September 13

Magic Mirror Divination

A vampire won't be seen in a mirror, or so goes the folklore, but mirrors may

also show what one might not otherwise see with the naked eye. Examples of this are depicted in the TV show, *Twin Peaks*, when the presence of possessing spirit Bob, portrayed by Frank Silva who died on this day in 1995, was revealed in mirrors.

Mirrors serve as powerful magical tools for various purposes. They can serve as portals to other dimensions or as communication devices in the same manner as spirit boards. Mirrors are used as divination tools in the same manner as crystal balls. Gaze into them and see. Of course, that's easier said than done. Mirrors are more accessible than crystal balls but can be daunting because it's easy to get distracted by your own reflection. Any type of mirror may serve as a magic mirror, but small hand mirrors or standing makeup mirrors that can be tilted are easier to work with at first, especially if you're still mastering techniques.

1. Tilt the mirror so that you're not looking directly at yourself, or, if this is impossible, look beyond yourself, essentially giving the mirror the side-eye. It can be hard to resist the temptation to look at yourself, but this becomes easier over time.
2. Keep lights low and allow yourself to fall into a relaxed, semi-trance state.
3. Gaze at the mirror with a softened gaze. No need to stare intensely or prevent yourself from blinking.
4. Images may begin to appear in the mirror or in your mind's eye. Allow them to unfold. (This is the truly hard part: in the beginning, it's challenging not to react, stare, or move your head in reaction. These actions will, however, most likely cause the vision to vanish.)
5. You can simply see what there is to see or you may pose a question at the beginning of the session if seeking guidance or answers.

Time yourself. No more than five minutes at first, then ten, then working up to fifteen. Magic mirrors should be treated similarly to crystal balls: covered or put away when not in use.



Spirits of the Day

THE CAPITOLINE TRIAD

Although each of these deities is also venerated independently, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, and Minerva make up the Capitoline Triad, essentially the ruling deities of Rome. They are honored together today on the anniversary of the Roman feast of the Lectisternium. The name derives from the Latin *lectum sternere* meaning “to drape a couch.” The Romans—the rich ones, at least—famously ate while reclining. During the Lectisternium, celebratory feasts were prepared for honored deities, presented as if they were truly dining.

The Etruscan kings are believed to have built the first temple to the Triad on the Capitoline Hill in Rome (although what was there earlier is now unknown.) “Capitoline” derives from *caput*, the Latin word for “head.” Their temple was known as the Capitolium, and together they form the head of the Roman pantheon. Although many modern mythology books, especially those for children, treat the Roman deities as if they were identical to those of Greece, the Capitoline Triad is an example of how these pantheons are different. In the Greek myth of Athena, she is the daughter of Zeus alone, born fully formed from his head. She has a tenuous relationship with Hera, Zeus’ wife. The Romans considered the Capitoline Triad as a harmonious family: father, mother, and daughter, cooperating with each other on behalf of Rome. Harmony, power, the well-being of family and region—these are the concerns of the Capitoline Triad. If you seek their favor, offer them a sumptuous meal today on a beautifully set table (as opposed to offerings set on an altar). Light candles for them and dine with them.

September 14

Black Madonna of Einsiedeln

Today is the feast of this powerful and mysterious Black Madonna, also known as the Black Madonna of the Dark Forest, who is housed in the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, near Zurich. Among the greatest of the Black Madonnas, she is believed capable of healing *any* ailment and has a long reputation for weather-related miracles. Her color is black. Offer her candles, roses, and good deeds on behalf of the poor and needy.

September 15

Saint and Spirit of the Day

OUR LADY OF SEVEN SORROWS

The concept of Mary as the Sorrowful Mother is a prevalent theme in Marian devotional art. The Seven Sorrows of Mary refers to seven events in her life, so painful that they pierced her heart like swords. Also called the Lady of Sorrows, and the Mater Dolorosa, she is portrayed as a beautiful, grieving woman, literally stabbed in the heart by seven swords, knives, or daggers. Variations exist; sometimes there is just one large sword. Sometimes she is humbly cloaked in blue, while other portraits depict her as a bejeweled queen.

Today is her official feast. Depending on location, there may be processions or other rituals. (She is also honored on the Friday before Good Friday.) The Mater Dolorosa is believed capable of producing any miracle. Her primary constituents include those who grieve, those who have lost children, especially those who have witnessed their deaths, as well as those named Dolores or variants of that name, such as Lola. However, anyone may seek her blessings.

EZILI FREDA DAHOMEY

The Vodou lwa Ezili Freda Dahomey is represented by the image of Our Lady of Sorrows, and so today is her feast, too. More information may be found in the entry for [June 9](#).



September 16

Saint of the Day

SAINT CYPRIAN, BISHOP OF CARTHAGE

Today is the first of two dates in September dedicated to saints named Cyprian. (See [September 26](#) for the other.) Similarities exist between the two, who are often confused and conflated. The saint of September 26 is the sorcerer saint, but many celebrate him today, in addition to his own feast, instead of today's actual saint. Some assume that there are two different feasts for the same man, perhaps from different denominations, but in fact, there are two Cyprians.

Born into a prominent Berber family in Carthage, today's saint may have been an attorney, and may also, like his fellow Cyprian, have been a magician, if not to the same degree. Converting to Christianity when he was about thirty-five, he gave away his wealth and rapidly rose to a position of prominence in the Church, becoming Bishop of Carthage. He was beheaded with a sword during Christian persecutions. Although he died on September 14, 258 ce, today is his feast.

Saint Cyprian Oil

This magical formula reputedly transmits the power of the magician-saint. Use it to amp up the power of any spell or working. As several of the ingredients are widely considered aphrodisiacs, there's an erotic component, too. Saint Cyprian (the September 26 one) bore a reputation as a player, a ladies' man. This oil could be used in seduction and reconciliation magic. Although named for the saint, it's a popular, modern formula inspired by him. Cyprian would have been familiar with most of the ingredients, but bethroot is indigenous to North America, used in love-drawing magic by Native Americans and as a prosperity magnet in African American Hoodoo.

INGREDIENTS

bethroot (*Trillium erectum*), cedarwood shavings or the essential oil
ground cinnamon
essential oil of cypress
myrrh resin or essential oil
orris root
plus a base oil: sunflower, safflower, or olive

Quantities depend on how much oil you would like to make. If you only desire a little for one-time use, a pinch of the dry ingredients and a few drops of each essential oil are enough.

1. Pulverize all dry ingredients with a mortar and pestle. Focus on your spell's goal and petition Saint Cyprian, as desired.

2. Add the dry ingredients to a jar and cover them with the base oil.
3. Unless you are using the oil in its entirety immediately, a preservative is required to prevent the oil from becoming rancid. Add jojoba oil or the contents of a Vitamin E gel capsule.
4. Blend this together gently before adding essential oils, drop by drop. There is no precise amount required. Instead, follow your nose: it should smell pleasant and evocative, like a mysterious perfumed oil.

September 17

Saint of the Day

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–September 17, 1179), known as the Sybil of the Rhine, was an author, Benedictine abbess, mystic, visionary, seer, healer, herbalist, playwright, preacher, creator of gem elixirs, composer, lecturer, musician, exorcist, and advisor of kings and popes. Hildegard is the matron saint of overachievers.

Although she lived centuries ago, Hildegard's writings, remedies, and music remain accessible through books and recordings. She is the matron saint of artists, autodidacts, clairvoyants, environmentalists, gardeners, homeschoolers, and musicians, as well as healers who incorporate crystals and spiritual methods into their practices.

Throughout her life, Hildegard suffered excruciating headaches, followed by temporary blindness and paralysis, culminating in euphoria. These symptoms have been interpreted as resembling migraines, and Hildegard has evolved into the go-to saint for migraine sufferers. Today, the anniversary of her death in 1179, is her feast and an opportune time to request that she remove or alleviate your suffering.

1. Create an altar for her. Decorate with things she would love, such as crystals and gem elixirs, as well as more conventional religious imagery.
2. Light candles for Hildegard. Her favored offerings include beer, Rhine wine, spelt grain bread, and your own creative endeavors. Sing for her or write poetry.

3. Request that she heal you and offer charitable or creative donations on behalf of others. Offer what is realistic for you, but something like a charitable donation each month that you are migraine-free is appropriate. Hildegard was a sensible and unpretentious woman. Modest offerings are acceptable.

September 18

Pamela “Pixie” Colman Smith, an artist, occultist, author, and member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, was commissioned by author A. E. Waite to provide illustrations for what was published as the Rider-Waite Tarot. The most popular and influential of all tarot decks, many now call it the Rider-Waite-Smith. In commemoration of Pixie’s death on this day in 1951, let’s devote some thought for Tarot.

Tarot cards have many uses beyond divination and meditation. Each card may also be used as a potent magical tool in spellcraft, for example to induce dreams. The following spell incorporates Tarot cards into both candle magic and charm bags, but their uses are virtually innumerable. For this prosperity spell, the card essentially becomes a money magnet, but it can be adapted to suit your needs, whatever they are. Choose a card and a deck that resonate strongly with you, as the card will transmit your desires to the universe.

Tarot Prosperity Spell

Choose the 10 of Pentacles, the Ace of Pentacles, or any card that represents money or prosperity for you. The cards will be destroyed, so use a copy or purchase a deck with the intention of using individual cards as spell ingredients.

1. Pull the card you’ve chosen from the deck and place it on a fire-safe dish.
2. Sprinkle the card with money-drawing oils or oils that encourage luck and success, for example, *Crown of Success*. (The formula is in the [January 12](#) entry.) If you prefer, you can rub the oils on the card, front and back.
3. Surround the card with small objects that represent your goal: for example, coins or paper money. You may use real money if you want, but it will no longer be useable. Foreign coins that you don’t expect to use or coins no

longer in circulation are great to use in this spell. You can also use representations of money, such as Monopoly game money or East Asian spirit money.

4. Prepare a candle in a color that represents money or wealth to you, typically green or gold.
5. Place the candle atop the card and burn it.
6. Some like to hold the card in the flame and burn it, too, but if you do this, be careful. Hold the card with tweezers or some other similar tool, not your fingers.
7. When the candle has burned down, collect the remnants—coins, ashes, any auspiciously shaped bits of wax—and place them inside a small charm bag. Carry this with you or place it beneath your mattress to help your money grow.

September 19

Spirit of the Day

MORGAN LE FAY

Now most famous as King Arthur's sorceress sister, Morgan Le Fay predates those Arthurian legends. Some believe that she was originally a Celtic death goddess—a psychopomp who helped guide dead souls to their next destination. Morgan is the ruler of Avalon—the Isle of Apples—a Celtic paradise. Although later legends, transcribed by Cistercian monks, portray her as Arthur's villainous but mortal half-sister, her name reveals her true identity.

Morgan Le Fay means "Morgan the Fairy." In Italy, where she also has a following, her name is Fata Morgana, reminding us that fairies derive from or are related to the goddesses known as the Fates. "Morgan" likely translates as "mermaid," and Morgan is sometimes envisioned in that form. She may or may not be an aspect of the Irish goddess, the Morrigan.

The Arthurian legends were first written down by Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1138 but are based on earlier Breton and Welsh legends. Writing a century later, the Cistercians were uncomfortable with Pagan elements in these much-loved myths, and so, in their retelling, which then inspired others, Morgan is the central villain. In earlier versions, she is not Arthur's sister, thus there is no

incest. Instead she is a healer and the leader of the Nine Holy Women of Avalon who tend Arthur's wounds. It is only in the thirteenth century—coinciding with the first seeds of Europe's witch hunts—that Morgan was transformed into a ruthless, destructive, bitter villain, the role she would play until Marion Zimmer Bradley's best-selling 1982 novel *The Mists of Avalon* presented her as a heroine.

Today is the Breton name day for those named Morgan and its variants (Morgana, Morgaine), and so it has evolved into a feast for the fairy goddess Morgan Le Fay. Although she is not a saint, her name appears on a Breton saint calendar for September 22. Numerous figures of Arthurian lore, such as Anna Pendragon, Arthur's foster mother, and her son, Sir Kay, are considered saints by the Celtic Church, and so, perhaps at one time, early in Brittany's conversion to Christianity, Morgan was also considered a saint. Either or both dates may be celebrated.

Morgan is usually envisioned as a beautiful woman or mermaid, but she is a renowned shapeshifter who can theoretically appear in any form. Crows and ravens serve as her messengers. She is a mistress of transformation and illusion, a goddess of healing, love, life, and death. In addition to Avalon, Morgan rules an underwater paradise near Brittany; a castle staffed by fairies near Edinburgh; and Mongibello, a paradise on or near Sicily's Mount Aetna. Offer her candles, magical tools, beautiful apples, fine hard cider, and gifts suitable for a sorceress queen.

September 20

Depending on the calendar year, today may or may not be the exact astronomical equinox, but it is certainly equinox season. For the ancient Greeks, this time was associated with the goddess Persephone, whose annual descent into Hades coincided with the autumnal equinox, and her mother, grain goddess Demeter. Roman goddesses Proserpina and Ceres would inherit their myths. The equinox marks the end of Virgo season: that constellation is sometimes interpreted as representing Persephone holding a stalk of wheat or a mysterious baby. It is an excellent opportunity to venerate or invoke any or all of these powerful goddesses. For more about Demeter, see [May 25](#). For more about Ceres, see [January 24](#). For more about Proserpina, see [April 1](#). Persephone's name may be interpreted as "destroying face." Her husband may have inherited rulership of

the Greek realm of death by marrying her, not the other way around. Many historians theorize that Persephone is an exceptionally ancient deity and that she was the original ruler of the Greek afterlife, despite myths that now suggest otherwise. Persephone is invoked for a painless, easy death. She can banish ghosts, remove hauntings, and enable communication between the living and the dead. Her image reputedly wards off ghosts. Persephone will share an altar with her mother Demeter and her friend and companion, Hekate. Offer her roses, parsley, and black flowers, such as the Queen of Night tulips or black-bearded irises.

September 21

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Vervain Lucky Love Bath

Legend says that vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) brings luck in all things including love.

1. Place the dried botanical in a bowl and make an infusion by pouring boiling water over it.
2. After the infusion has cooled off, draw a bath. Undress and enter, then add the infusion, ladling it over yourself.
3. Ideally, add the whole infusion, including plant material, but if you fear for your drains, strain the botanicals out first.

Saint Matthew

Matthew is believed to have served as a tax collector—a despised profession in first-century Judea—before he joined the Apostles. When Jesus was criticized for dining with a tax collector, it was Matthew he was dining with. Matthew is the patron saint of accountants, tax collectors, coin collectors, security guards, and customs officers. Today is his feast. A folk custom recommends purchasing

new candlesticks on Saint Matthew's Day to bring good luck and prosperity.

September 22

Spirit of the Day

MORGAN LE FAY

Today is the Breton name day for those named Morgan or its variants, and it has evolved into a feast for the goddess. Morgan is believed to be far older than the Arthurian sagas in which she stars. In her earliest incarnations, she may have been a Celtic death goddess. Her services as a psychopomp—a spirit who serves as an escort for dead souls traveling to their next realm—may still be invoked. Morgan's primary modern fame is as a magnificently powerful sorceress, and it is in this guise that she stars in movies, TV, and all manner of books including comic books. Morgan may be requested to bless one's magical efforts and to provide spiritual guidance and lessons in the occult arts, especially via dreams and visualizations. Please see [September 19](#) for more information about this witch goddess.

September 23

Saint of the Day

PADRE PIO

Among the most beloved, mysterious, and controversial saints, his is currently the second-most popular Roman Catholic pilgrimage, surpassed only by Mexico's Guadalupe. Born Francisco Forgione in Pietrelcina, Italy, on May 25, 1887, he was a fragile youth who suffered from tuberculosis. Drafted during World War I, he was sent home because of his health. Taking the name Pio, he eventually entered the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo in his hometown, where he spent the rest of his life and is now entombed.

Padre Pio died on this day in 1968, and it is his feast. Offer him candles, flowers, good deeds on behalf of the poor, or donations to his hospital (in 1956, Padre Pio opened a hospital, the House for the Relief of Suffering, funded by

donations). Padre Pio can reputedly produce any miracle, although healing is his specialty, especially those ailments that are not easily treatable by conventional means.

September 24

Paracelsus, who died on this day, wrote disapprovingly of love spells cast by placing items of clothing, the more intimate the better, under the pillow, bedding, or mattress of the spell's target. The intent is for the sleeping target to become susceptible to the spellcaster's charms. Defenses tend to be down during sleep—think of the elaborate techniques used in the movie *Inception*. A candle spell attempts to exploit this relaxed state in order to enhance or encourage communication.

Skull Candle Communication Spell

Candles formed in the shape of skulls are used to get inside someone's head. Perhaps someone isn't listening to you. Perhaps you have information that is needed or beneficial but the person who needs to hear it is inaccessible. Or perhaps you're too shy to communicate your desires. This spell is an attempt at remote communication. All it requires is a skull candle, ideally one small enough to fit in your hand.

1. Scratch the name of the spell's target across the skull candle's forehead.
2. The candle may be dressed with an appropriate oil.
3. Hold the candle in your hand so that you are gazing into the eye sockets, and talk to the skull as if it were a phone. Tell it what you wish you could say to the person it represents.
4. When you're ready, burn the candle. You can continue to speak to the skull while it's lit. If you need to put out the candle before it's burned all the way, repeat step 3 when you relight it.

Tips for success:

- Keep all your communication clear and simple. Think about what you wish

to say in advance.

- This spell is most effective if cast when the other person is asleep, especially if it's someone who would resist listening to you if they were awake.
- Do not use this technique to threaten or scare someone. Beyond ethical concerns, doing so will likely wake them up and cause them to seek added protection and may perhaps increase resistance.

September 25

Tonight is Saint Cyprian's Eve; tomorrow is his feast. Cyprian, a magician in life, is among the most magical of all saints. Details are found in the [September 26](#) entry. This invocation, however, may be best done tonight, as it seeks Cyprian's presence in your dreams. The banishing spell associated with Cyprian may be done at any time but is best tonight or tomorrow.

Saint Cyprian Dream Diagnosis

1. Soak a cotton ball in Saint Cyprian Oil or dab a couple of drops on a dream pillow. The formula is found in the entry for [September 16](#).
2. Place this beneath your pillow.
3. Before you go to sleep, request that Cyprian send a dream offering medical advice. You may request that he heal you or others.

SAINT CYPRIAN BANISHING SPELL

A ceremonial magician who allegedly commanded a host of demons, Cyprian still commands them. He reputedly wrote some of the exorcism prayers still in use and may be invoked to banish dangerous spirits. Allegedly saying his name is sufficient to send some low-level demons searching for an exit. If that's not enough, add frankincense to the basic [Saint Cyprian Oil](#) recipe.

1. Dress brown and white candles with this enhanced Saint Cyprian Oil.
2. Create a circle of these candles, alternating the colors. (And if you're afraid

or feel unsafe, this spell may be cast from within the circle.)

3. As the candles burn, pray, repeat Psalms, and request Cyprian's assistance.
4. Tell the unwanted spirits that Cyprian is on his way with his exorcism tools and that they should leave before he arrives.

September 26

Because of its long associations with twin saints Cosmas and Damian, as well as the African Diaspora siblings associated with them, today is a day of twin energy. If you're a twin, triplet, or other multiple birth, today is your day to celebrate yourself and your siblings. If you feel that, for any reason, you possess a split soul, then this may be a day for you, too. This may also be an auspicious date for Geminis or those with Gemini prominent in their natal chart.

But the concept of "twinning" or "doubling" also has magical implications. Doubling is a significant concept in prosperity magic. Two is a number of prosperity and promise. As the sayings go, "it takes two to tango" or "where you see two rabbits, there are more." Two potentially leads to three—or more!

Two Dollar Money Spell

Two-dollar bills epitomize the concept of doubling. They're rarely seen, as people tend to hold on to them for good luck. This spell encourages you to do the same. Two-dollar bills are obtainable from most banks, although it may be necessary to specifically request them.

1. Anoint a two-dollar bill with Money Oil, placing a dab at each corner and one in the center. Give it a kiss—blowing one is fine—and *tell* it to multiply, rather than requesting or asking. Use the Money Oil recipe from the [January 4](#) entry or any other that you prefer.
2. Roll the bill *toward* you and tie it up with a small red or green ribbon.
3. Carry this talisman with you in a charm bag or keep it in a safe place, such as under your mattress or in an unused purse.
4. If you can't obtain a two-dollar bill, this spell works with two one-dollar bills, too. In that case, dab both bills with the Money Oil, then gently tie

them together with a ribbon.



Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINTS COSMOS AND DAMIAN

Cosmos and Damian (died c. 303 ce), twin brothers from Syria, devout Christians, studied medicine and the sciences and developed a reputation as miraculous healers while they were still alive. This drew the attention of the governor of Cilicia, who demanded that they renounce their faith. The brothers refused and were executed, after being tortured. They continued producing miracles after their deaths and quickly became among the most popular saints. Some of this popularity may be absorbed from another pair of sacred twins, Castor and Pollux, known as the Dioscuri. They are the twins of the constellation Gemini. (*Gemini* literally means “twins.”) Castor and Pollux have twin sisters: Clytemnestra and Helen of Troy. The Medici family adopted Cosmos and Damian as family patrons, which further encouraged devotion to these two heavenly helpers. Today is their feast day, but they are also celebrated tomorrow, September 27. True fans may celebrate them for the full forty-eight hours.

Although they may be venerated or petitioned individually, the brothers are virtually always portrayed standing side by side. Their identifying emblem is a spoon with which to dispense medicine, as well as jars and containers for unguents, ointments, and balms. Cosmos and Damian remain great healers with their specialty being hernias and other ruptures, as well as gangrene. They reputedly heal and offer suggestions as to diagnoses and health plans in dreams if people sleep in their shrines. Many churches around the world are dedicated to them, but you can also create a home shrine.

In the afterlife, the brothers have branched out and now fulfill many kinds of requests:

- The brothers are invoked for marital happiness. If you’d like to be wed, they have a reputation for miraculously connecting you with Mr. or Ms.

Right or whomever you're seeking, if they're requested to do so.

- Guardians of children, they may be invoked to protect them in orphanages, foster homes, schools, and detention centers. If you'd like to have children, the brothers may be invoked for fertility and to heal whatever obstructs it.
- Cosmos, in particular, is associated with virility—obtaining it, maintaining it, or improving it. It is traditional to offer phallus-shaped *milagros* when seeking assistance with virility, as part of the process.

Traditional offerings for Cosmos and Damian include candles, incense, and candy, as well as donations to the sick and needy and those physicians and medical associations that care for the poor.

CYPRIAN OF ANTIOCH

There are two Saint Cyprians, but today's saint is the one usually venerated as the sorcerer saint. Please see [September 16](#) for information on the other Cyprian and for the formula for Saint Cyprian Oil.

Cyprian of Antioch (died September 26, 304) was a great Pagan magician, a master in his field, who, as with the other Cyprian, eventually renounced his old life, converted to Christianity, and attained a position of great power as a bishop before being martyred for his faith. Cyprian of Antioch destroyed his magical books, completely rejecting his past. *However*, in the afterlife, he seems to have reconsidered his actions. In the medieval era, a book appeared allegedly dictated by Cyprian to Jonas Sulfurino, a mysterious German monk in the year 1000. That book, the *Grimoire of Saint Cyprian* or the *Grimorio de San Cipriano* in Spanish, became simultaneously notorious and popular. It is the cornerstone of much Iberian folk magic and has been translated into numerous languages. Some fear it as a “diabolical book” claiming that once you've opened your copy, you'll never be rid of the book, as it will return, even after being thrown out or burned. Various versions of this book exist. Numerous other completely different grimoires are also attributed to Cyprian.

An exceptionally powerful saint, there is little that Cyprian is believed incapable of doing. He reconciles lovers and halts harassment and abuse. He may be invoked for justice and to locate missing people and stolen goods, as well as for miracles involving health and healing.

Because of perceived shared associations with the magical arts, Cyprian is the Vatican's official patron saint of the Romani (Gypsies), and also of exorcists, nomads, the homeless, and those who wander. *Unofficially*, he is the patron of

alchemists, fortune-tellers, magicians, necromancers, witches, and wizards. He is associated with the acquisition of werewolf skills. If you would like to be a werewolf, Cyprian can teach you how or affect the transformation. If you change your mind, he can reverse it as well. Cyprian is traditionally offered candles and incense, but he is also given gifts to please an occultist, such as magical tools.

THE IBEJI

The Yoruba of Nigeria have the highest percentage of multiple births on Earth. The Ibeji are the sacred twins of the Yoruba pantheon. Depending on the version of the myth, their parents may be either Oshun and Ochossi, Oshun and Shango, or Oya and Shango. Although they are called “twins,” there may be a third Ibeji, either because they are actually triplets or because he is the single child born after the birth of twins and who is perceived as spiritually tied to his or her siblings.

The Ibeji are envisioned as small children, typically rambunctious boys. Dolls may be used to represent them. However, they are syncretized with Cosmos and Damian, and images of the twin saints may be used to represent the orisha twins. Today is their feast day, too. The Ibeji bring joy, good health, prosperity, and fun in their wake. If your life is dull, their presence may stir things up, as they don’t like being bored. [Tip: it’s best if you create an interesting, lively, vital atmosphere. Their concept of fun may not be the same as yours.]

It’s crucial to recall that the Ibeji are *not* small children. They are powerful and ancient spirits in the guise of small children. The Ibeji are powerful healers. They can reputedly heal anything, but their specialties are mental disorders and anything that endangers a child. If you are a twin or other multiple birth or parents of these, or if your family has a history of multiple births, then the Ibeji are your patrons; however, they are the guardians of children, in general.

Offer them sugarcane and sweets, as well as things young children like. They are associated with monkeys in general, and with beautiful colobus monkeys in particular. According to traditional Yoruba belief, twins, their families, or devotees of the Ibeji must not consume, harm, or harass monkeys. Donations on behalf of the welfare of monkeys may also be an acceptable offering.

THE MARASSA

The Marassa are the sacred twins of Haitian Vodou. As with the Ibeji, there may be more than two. Because they may be syncretized to Saints Cosmos and Damian, today may be celebrated as their feast as well. However, their primary

feast is on [December 28](#) in the heart of a month-long period associated with them. Please see that date for more information.

The Marassa preside over a month-long Season of the Twins beginning on December 6, the feast of Saint Nicholas, and concluding on January 6 during the Feast of the Epiphany. It is an auspicious time for twins or other multiple births, their parents, or those from families where multiple births are not uncommon.



September 27

Saints and Spirits of the Day

LA SIRÈNE

La Sirène, Queen of the Choir, Mistress of Mystics, is Haitian Vodou's beautiful mermaid. La Sirène literally means "the mermaid" in French. The Kreyol spelling is Sirenn. She may also be called Ezili of the Sea, indicating her membership in this sisterhood of Haitian spirits. (See [June 9](#) for details on the Ezili spirits.) La Sirène epitomizes the beauty, allure, generosity, and danger inherent in mermaids. Her symbols include a trumpet and a mirror.

The trumpet emphasizes her musical talents and her love of musicians, but it's also the tool with which she calls the other lwa and spirits. Allegedly, should you find her trumpet, you're guaranteed a lifetime of wealth. La Sirène is a spirit of prosperity. Her image invites financial success and is often found decorating lottery parlors. Her trumpet is also reminiscent of the horn blown on Judgment

Day. La Sirène rules an undersea realm that is also an afterlife paradise. Although she is generally a benevolent spirit, she is not to be trifled with. Those who displease her should make amends or do their best to stay out of the water. The mirror that La Sirène holds also represents her afterlife connections and her ability to exist in this world and its mirror reflection. La Sirène is typically envisioned as the wife of Lord Agwë, a king of the sea, but she is also portrayed in Simbi's embrace. (See [July 4](#) and [January 6](#), respectively.) Her other symbols include a comb, a bell, and percussion instruments such as a rattle.

La Sirène favors singers, musicians, occultists, and lovers of the sea. She is invoked for love, fertility, and wealth, as well as safe passage over the sea, and to bestow mystic knowledge. She is syncretized to the Stella Maris, and so today is her feast. Decorate her altars with marine and mermaid imagery. Traditional offerings include combs, hand mirrors, bells, cosmetics, expensive cigarettes, hair ornaments, champagne, and French pastries.

Today is an excellent time for mirror divination, as discussed on September 13. Request the blessings for La Sirène on your endeavors. If you're finding mirror divination challenging, request her assistance. She may also be invoked for help with any other occult quest.

STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris means "Star of the Sea" in Latin and is among the titles given to Mary. However, the same words in different languages have also been epithets for goddesses such as Lady Asherah of the Sea, Isis, Kwan Yin, and Ma Zu. "Stella Maris" also names a popular image portraying a beautiful, crowned woman with long, flowing hair and garbed in white, who appears to emerge from the sea. The moon shines above her, while flowers and stars fall from her hands. This image was originally intended to represent Mary but has also come to represent African Diaspora spirits syncretized to her, such as Yemaya or La Sirène. The title Stella Maris may mean any or all of them.

The Stella Maris is a sacred spirit of the sea. She is invoked for safe passage over the sea, literally but also metaphorically: she is a guardian and guide for those traversing the stormy waters of life and love. Today is her feast. Decorate altars with symbols of the sea. Her colors are blue, green, crystal clear, white as

the waves, and other marine colors. Today is traditionally an ideal time to bless boats or embark on journeys.

YEMAYA

As the image of the Stella Maris is frequently used to represent Yemaya, today is also a feast of this powerful orisha. Please see [January 1](#) for more information.

September 28

Tomorrow is the feast of Archangel Michael, and so tonight is Michael's Eve. Information about Michael is in the entry for [September 29](#), but tonight is also a good time to avail yourself of Michael's protection. Cinnamon conveys some of Michael's fiery essence. A simple cleansing spell involves nothing more than a cinnamon stick.

Cinnamon Cleansing Spells

1. Holding one end of a cinnamon stick with tweezers or your fingers, however you feel most comfortable, light the other end as if it were a stick of incense.
2. Allow the stick to smolder and smoke.
3. Waft the smoke around yourself, other people, or throughout a space, focusing on your goal of spiritual cleansing and magical protection.

A similar house cleansing is accomplished by simmering cinnamon sticks in a cauldron or pot.

1. Boil several cinnamon sticks in a pot of water. Add cloves, if desired.
2. Allow the water to come to a gentle, rolling boil—the goal is to produce steam.
3. Once this is accomplished, carefully carry the pot around the space you seek to spiritually cleanse, wafting the steam in corners and wherever desired. Be careful not to spill the liquid, which will be boiling hot and can potentially injure you or others. When the pot stops steaming, the ritual is

complete.

In some folk traditions, tonight and tomorrow are excellent times to gather plants for magical use, especially those uses that reflect Michael's powers: healing and protection. Examples are angelica, garlic, and Michaelmas daisies.

Saint and Spirit of the Day

MARY, UNDOER OF KNOTS

When life makes you feel as if you're tied up in knots, many turn to Mary, Undoer of Knots. Also known as the Untier or Loosener of Knots, this names a painting as well as a devotion. The painting reflects the devotion but also inspires it.

The Baroque painting by Johann Georg Melchior Schmidtner was commissioned in the late seventeenth century and donated in about 1700 to the Saint Peter am Perlach Church in Augsburg, Germany. In the painting, Mary, wearing a crown of stars, stands on a crescent moon with one foot atop a serpent. A dove floats over her head and angels surround her. She holds a long white ribbon in her hands from which she removes knots. Legend has it that the painting was initially commissioned in honor of a local man who, seeking help from a priest in order to save his failing marriage, brought with him the long white marriage band that had been used to tie the couple's hands together during their wedding ceremony. The priest, holding the ribbon as he prayed to Mary on their behalf, experienced an apparition of Mary. As this happened, the white band in his hand miraculously became smooth and intensely white. The marriage was saved, and the painting commissioned by the couple's grandson.

The painting inspired devotion, which continues to grow. The first chapel named for Mary, Untier of Knots was built in Austria in 1989, as a response to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. She is especially popular in Argentina and Brazil. Devotees include Pope Francis, who encourages veneration of this image. (It's been called Francis' favorite religious image.)

Mary, Untier of Knots Ritual

1. Write or embroider your pleas, petitions, or the problems that must be unknotted onto white ribbons.
2. Hang your ribbon near an image of Mary, Untier of Knots.
3. Petition her blessings and burn candles for her until your goal is

accomplished.

4. Acknowledge the blessing by doing good deeds on behalf of the poor or those suffering from your previous condition.

Mary, Undoer of Knots is also invoked to undo curses and hexes, especially those involving knot magic. If someone has used knots against you, Mary, Undoer of Knots can repair the situation. In the Dominican Vodou tradition known as the 21 Divisions, the spirit Gran Zero is identified with Mary, Undoer of Knots, and the two may be invoked to break curses together.

It is traditional to begin novenas (nine-day prayer rituals) today. A subversive interpretation of Mary, Undoer of Knots suggests that the Swabian goddess Zisa lies beneath Mary's mask. The two share a feast day.

ZISA

Zisa, also spelled Cisa, is the goddess of the southern German city of Augsburg, founded in 15 BCE by the Romans and named in honor of Augustus Caesar. As with so many suppressed and banished goddesses, little information survives about Zisa. The Church of St. Peter am Perlach, home of the painting *Mary, Untier of Knots*, is built over one of her shrines. Another shrine was reputedly on the mountain known as the Zisemberk. Some perceive that her image appears on the bronze doors of Augsburg Cathedral, which is dedicated to Mary. Today was Zisa's feast first. Legend says that the anniversary of a Germanic victory over invading Romans in September of 9 BCE coincided with Zisa's annual feast and occurred today. Zisa is venerated in some, but not all, modern Northern traditions. Her symbol is the pinecone; her color is red; her day is Tuesday.



September 29

Today is the feast day of Archangel Michael, also known as Michaelmas. Michael's history, if not the date of the feast, extends far back into prehistory. Michael ranks among the most beloved of all sacred beings. His veneration transcends religious boundaries. Michael, who may have first emerged as a deity in Mesopotamia, is considered an archangel by Jews and Muslims and is one of Christianity's three archangel-saints. Michael is similarly beloved by Pagans, angel lovers, and the unaffiliated.

Michael is the angel of righteousness: he does what is right and cannot be corrupted. He may be invoked for justice. As humanity's defender, our magical guardian, Michael can banish and defeat all malignant spirits. Merely saying his name reputedly disperses nasty low-level entities. Although theoretically everyone's guardian, Michael is the special guardian of rape victims and may be invoked for protection against sexual abuse and to bring rapists and abusers to justice. Michael is also the guardian of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and soldiers. His was among the voices that guided Joan of Arc. Additionally, Michael is the Angel of Insomnia and may be invoked to heal or soothe that condition.

Burn red candles or frankincense to honor Michael or to express gratitude, although theoretically angels neither request nor require offerings. Vows made to Michael must be fulfilled.

Repeat the following invocation of Archangel Michael daily or as needed. It may be said silently or aloud:

*Michael to the right of me,
Michael to the left of me,
Michael before me,
Michael behind me,
Michael above me,
Michael below me,
Michael within me,
Michael all around me,
Michael, with your flaming sword of cobalt blue, please protect me
always.*

Envision yourself within a bubble of safety provided by Michael, perhaps something like a cobalt-blue version of Glinda's bubble in the MGM musical,

The Wizard of Oz. Personalized requests for Michael may be incorporated at the end of that invocation. For example, protect my child, my dog, and so forth, providing names as specifically as possible.

In some Italian traditions, Michael is literally present in garlic. In the presence of garlic, you are simultaneously in Michael's presence. Michael is a great healer, and garlic has been shown to have antibacterial, antiviral, and other medicinal properties. It's also used magically for protection. Hang fresh garlic braids in your dwelling or place a head of garlic on your altar as a method of increasing Michael's presence.

Fiery Wall of Protection Oil

Associated with Michael, this oil is believed to possess a portion of his guardian powers. This formula may be crafted at any time but will be especially attuned to Michael if made today. Please see the entry on [January 16](#) for the formula.

Celebrating Michael's feast is believed to bring good fortune over the winter and into the coming year. Christian myth identifies this day as a commemoration of Michael's victory over Lucifer and thus also the anniversary of the devil's fall from heaven. All sorts of ritual and lore stem from this tradition. For example:

- According to English lore, today is traditionally the last day of the harvest. Some perceive harvesting after Michaelmas as courting bad luck.
- Today is believed to be the last day one should pick blackberries. A legend recounts that after Lucifer fell from Heaven, he landed in a blackberry bush. He responded with anger, blaming the thorny bush and, depending on the variation of the legend, either urinated or spit on it, cursing it. That curse is believed to linger and have spread to all blackberry bushes: berries picked after this day are believed, at best, to taste bitter, and, at worst, to convey a little bit of Satan's essence.
- Mexican and some Latin American folk beliefs consider the feast of Archangel Michael (*San Miguel*) and its preceding eve to be ideal times for picking botanicals, especially for magical use. Rituals vary depending on locale and tradition. Also depending on locale and its tolerance for folk magic, herbs may be fashioned into cross-shapes and blessed by priests.
- English folk custom recommends eating goose today for a year of financial luck, and the day is sometimes called Goose Day. An old rhyme advises: *"He who eats goose on Michaelmas Day shant lack money or have debts to*

pay.”

Vatican reforms in 1969 eliminated the individual feast days of Gabriel and Raphael, the two other archangel-saints, instead arranging for them to share Michael's feast. The three may be venerated together today.

September 30

Tonight is October Eve, the night preceding the first day of October. For many this marks the beginning of the witching season. The season of the dead approaches as well. Today is a good time to recoup and prepare, whether that means shopping for holiday decorations or conducting cleansing rituals. The following spell derives from Chinese folk traditions and is intended to remove negative energy and low-level entities.

Rice and Salt House Cleansing

1. Take a cleansing bath before you proceed. Add salt to the tub or use a salt scrub.
2. Dress in clean, fresh clothes.
3. Blend equal parts white rice and sea salt in a bowl. Quantities depend on the size of the space to be cleansed. If it's large, you will need more than if you're cleansing a studio apartment.
4. Begin outside at the perimeter of your property. Walking clockwise, create a protective circle. (But don't scatter salt where it will damage plants and soil.)
5. Go inside and repeat this inside each room.
6. Conclude by going to the front door and any other doors leading outside.

Toss handfuls outside. The front door should be last.

7. Leave everything alone for twenty-four hours, then vacuum the salt and rice inside the home. Dispose of it outside the home immediately. The protective circle around the home may stay; it will eventually be dispersed by the wind.



October

Let the witching season begin! October is the tenth month of the year now, but back in old Roman days it was the eighth, as evidenced by its name. October derives from “octo” meaning “eight” in Latin, in the same way that “octopus” references that eight-limbed mollusk of the deep. October is the witching month, as it culminates in the holiday known as Halloween or Samhain. For many, this whole month is a countdown to this day, as evidenced by the growing popularity of Halloween Advent calendars.

The veils separating the realms of the living from the dead and mortals from spirits becomes increasingly sheer as the month progresses. Those sensitive to such things are likely to feel, see, or hear denizens of other worlds to varying extents depending on training and capacity. It is not unusual to experience dream visitations of the departed and to experience increased spirit activity. The veil is at its peak of permeability on October 31. Although other dates may be equally permeable, like Midsummer’s Eve, none surpasses Halloween. Those seeking to embark on a shamanic path or engage in some spirit work or psychic questing may attempt to ride the currents of this month like a surfer rides the waves.

The mood of the month tends to be anticipatory as, in addition to Halloween, it is also the gateway to the next three months (November, December, January), which are packed with magic and spiritual activity. Although October begins under the influence of the sign Libra, many of its predominant themes are scorpionic: witchcraft, occult mysteries, and the relationships between the living and the dead. Although November 2 is *the* Day of the Dead, *Dias de los Muertos* (Days of the Dead) rituals throughout Mexico and elsewhere may begin significantly earlier. Depending on region, this may be days or even weeks earlier than the culminating feast.

In the Northern Hemisphere, where our calendar originates, this month heralds the increasingly dark time. September’s weather may be indistinguishable from summer, depending on location, but by October the nights are visibly longer and the hours of sunlight shorter. The Celts split their year into halves: the dark half and the bright half. Samhain marked the beginning of the dark half. If one can conceptualize a six-month year, then October 31 begins the

Dark Year. With fewer available hours of sunlight—and before electric lights!—this is a time for storytelling, remembering, planning, and dreaming.

For the magically minded, as well as Halloween lovers, the beginning of October is a time to plan and get ready. Those dressing up must plan, obtain, or create costumes. Houses need decorating. Preparations for spells must be made and ingredients purchased. Those planning elaborate *ofrendas* (offering tables) for ancestors need time to plan and prepare, too.

October 31 is among the most powerful nights of the year—many would call it *the* most. It is the ideal time for spells of any kind, as well as for those spells and rituals that may only be performed at that time. (See [October 31](#).) For Wiccans and many witches, as well as those Christians who celebrate it as the Eve of All Saints, October 31 is a religious holiday. For many others, it's a fun, secular holiday. Spirits of the month include all the witch goddesses.

Angel of October: Barbiel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Libra and Scorpio

Birds of the Month: crow, goose, raven, swan

Birthstones of the Month: opal, tourmaline

Flowers of the Month: calendula, gloxinia, hops, marigolds

Animal of the Month: bat

October's Holidays and Extra Power Days

October 12: dedicated to numerous Black Madonnas and goddesses

October 31: Halloween, Samhain

Moveable Feasts

In Yaqui cosmology, **the first Friday of October is the Day of the Skull**, which ushers in the Festival of the Dead, culminating in *Dia de los Muertos* in November.

The name **Samhain** is frequently used as a synonym for Halloween or November Eve, but not always. The actual astronomical Samhain is not a fixed date but occurs at the mid-point between the equinox and the solstice. Samhain may also be celebrated as an entire lunar month, from the dark moon in October to the following dark moon.



October 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Black Dog Day

Black dogs are less likely to be adopted than others and thus are euthanized in disproportionate numbers. This sad fact has a name: Black Dog Syndrome. National Black Dog Day is an annual commemoration intended to publicize and combat Black Dog Syndrome. Reasons for Black Dog Syndrome are subject to debate and may overlap: prejudice against the color black or against dark colors, in general, or long associations of night-colored animals with witchcraft, which some people apparently think is a bad thing rather than something to be celebrated. Adoption events promoting black dogs are likely to be held today. Celebrate by adopting a black dog, or donate to a shelter.

BLACK DOG DEPRESSION

The “dog” of Black Dog Day is intended literally—the day is dedicated to actual black canines. That said, “black dog” is also a synonym for depression. While not the intent of the organizers, this is simultaneously a day to combat depression. Seek therapeutic assistance and, perhaps, explore potential benefits of emotional-support animals.

Saint and Spirits of the Day

THE BLACK DOG

Black Dog spirits, such as the Shuck or the Grim, are among the spectral hounds of the British Isles, although some seem to have traveled elsewhere too,

including the Americas. These dog spirits are typically described as shaggy, about the size of a calf, and with glowing red eyes. Many people find them menacing, but others are relieved to encounter them.

Black Dogs (the name is capitalized to indicate that these are spirits in canine form, *not* regular mortal dogs) are typically guardian spirits. Those associated with specific locations manifest in order to discourage intruders in the manner of a watch dog. They may cause harm to those who fail to heed their warnings. Some Black Dog spirits are personal guardians, who may manifest in order to escort someone to safety, typically in isolated places. Once their mission is complete, they typically vanish. The person may not realize the nature of the creature until its abrupt, mysterious departure.

Black dogs have historically been popular witches' familiars. They are also associated with specific goddesses, especially Lilith and Hekate, as companions, alter egos, or as the guise in which they travel. Although she is also associated with other creatures—black pigs, cats, hens, and horses, for example—the black dog is Hekate's primary companion, as well as the guise in which she frequently manifests. Donations and good deeds on behalf of canines of any color are appropriate offerings for Hekate. More information about this important and powerful goddess is found in the [November 16](#) entry.

SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX

*"I will spend my heaven doing good things on earth.
I will let fall a shower of roses."*

—THERESE OF LISIEUX

Therese died from tuberculosis at age twenty-four. She called herself a little flower; others call her "the TB saint." Since the day of her death, her intercession has been sought for the most serious illnesses—initially tuberculosis and cancer, but now AIDS as well. Her devotee, singer Edith Piaf, claimed that Therese restored her sight. There is little for which Saint Therese is *not* invoked: in addition to healing and preventing illness, she heals addictions of all kinds and dispels curses, hexes, and malevolent spells. She protects against all evil. Over the years, Therese has proven receptive to lovers; she is invoked to assist lovers, but also to find and protect true love. In life, Therese wished to travel, but her fragile health prevented her from fulfilling her dream. She now protects travelers from dangers of the road.

Her promise to let fall a shower of roses is frequently fulfilled quite literally. Unexpected roses are the signal that Saint Therese has heard your petition. Countless people attest to the seemingly miraculous appearance of roses

following prayers to Therese. Roses may appear in mysterious ways. For example, my friend lit a candle for Therese in conjunction with a petition directed to the saint. Only a few hours later, while walking on a busy Paris street, a passer-by—a stranger—simply handed her a rose and kept walking.

The Yoruba orisha Oya is sometimes syncretized to Saint Therese of Lisieux, and so she may be celebrated today, although she is more frequently identified with Teresa of Avila. Please see [October 15](#).

One way to honor Saint Therese is to follow her path, known as the Little Way. In her best-selling memoir, *Story of a Soul*, Therese wrote that it was not necessary for everyone to perform heroic deeds to attain holiness. It was sufficient only to love. In the words of John Lennon, “Love is the answer.”

Offer Saint Therese pink or red roses, as well as pink champagne or pink lemonade. The town of Lisieux in northwest France is now a pilgrimage site for its most famous daughter.

October 2

Holy Guardian Angel Day

This feast’s origins lie in Pagan Rome, where every man and woman was believed to have his or her own personal guardian, the *genius* and *iuno*, respectively. When Christianity became Rome’s state religion, the concept of a personal guardian evolved into the form of angels. This guardian angel was present at a person’s birth, accompanying them always, until their final breath. Today is a time to celebrate guardian angels, whether this is understood in the traditional sense or other ways. For example, a ritual to discover and contact your very own holy guardian angel is found in the grimoire *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.

Theoretically each individual has their own guardian angel, and so these angelic relationships are highly personal and unique. Honor your guardian angel as you deem best, whether to thank them for services rendered or encourage

them to work harder on your behalf. Here's one method: at midnight, light a white candle for each member of your household, including pets, in order to pay tribute to your guardian angels and invoke their assistance.

October 3

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Tips for Magical Protection

- Black, blue, and especially red are the colors most frequently associated with magical protection. Red radiates the power of a stop sign.
- The odd numbers 3, 5, 7, and 9 transmit protective energy.
- Black tourmaline crystals shield you from toxic energy emanating from people.
- Mirrors deflect malicious spells and the Evil Eye and return them to their sender.
- Amulets in the shape of human body parts, such as eyes, hands, or genitals, carry protective powers, for example the hand-shaped *hamsa*, Thai penis amulets, or the Eye of Horus.

October 4

National Vodka Day

The word “vodka” is an affectionate form of the Russian word for water: *voda*. This clear, relatively odorless distilled beverage is now among the world's most popular alcoholic beverages. Vodka also has magical and spiritual uses:

- It's an excellent base for tinctures and formulas requiring alcohol, for example if you're crafting homemade Florida Water.

- Serve it as an offering to Slavic deities.
- In Mongolia, vodka is used for magical cleansing in the same manner as Florida Water is elsewhere. (See [April 12.](#)) Sprinkle it in corners, over thresholds, and over magical tools that require cleansing. (Just be sure that it won't damage surfaces before using.) Add a splash to the bath for personal magical cleansing.



Saint and Spirit of the Day

CERES

This annual Roman holiday dedicated to Ceres and known as the *Ieiunium Cereris* was celebrated with fasting, not feasting. (*Ieiunium* means “abstinence” or “fasting.”) Instituted in 191 bce in response to a series of disturbing omens, the goal is to seek the grain goddess’s blessings and protection. It is no coincidence that today’s fast occurs the day before the scheduled opening of Rome’s *Mundus Patet*, the portal to the underworld. As it involves a realm beneath the surface of the Earth, it falls under Ceres’ dominion. If one identifies Ceres with Demeter, then her daughter Proserpina is a ruler of this underworld afterlife. Celebrants wore flower garlands. Please see [January 24](#) for more information about Ceres. Modern devotees often consider this a time to celebrate their goddess rather than to emulate ancient Roman rites. However, if seeking her protection, fasting may be in order.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Francis of Assisi (September 26, 1181–October 4, 1228), among the world’s favorite saints, is beloved even by those not usually interested or impressed by saints. A rich, wild youth, he was a brawler, a troubadour, and would-be soldier who loved luxury, until he experienced a profound spiritual vision in which he heard Christ tell him to abandon his worldly life. Heeding the call, Francis left the life he loved for one of voluntary deprivation. He walked barefoot, dressed in rough clothes, and preached in the streets. His vow of poverty was perceived as extremely controversial, as it was understood as a reproach to the Vatican’s extreme and ostentatious wealth. Francis was widely considered a heretic, during

an era when heretics were burned.

Francis called all living beings his sisters and brothers. Among his last words on his deathbed, Francis thanked his donkey for its years of faithful service.

Francis is invoked to protect animals of all kinds. He is also invoked to protect people from animals and to prevent any conflict between humans and other species. If you have an unhappy situation with animals—an infestation, or your neighbor's frightening dog—request that Francis resolve it happily for all.

Francis is invoked to prevent and heal stings, bites, and venomous attacks. He may be helpful with tick-borne Lyme disease or any animal-related influenza, such as swine flu. Francis also provides peace in the home and office. Francis is requested to prevent someone from dying alone. He is now the patron saint of Italy, ecology, and environmentalists, as well as those who love and care for birds, animals, and other living beings in any capacity. Service on behalf of animals is an appropriate offering in addition to the usual candles and incense.

ORUNMILA

Also known as Orunla and Baba Ifa, this orisha is Yoruba's sacred diviner, master of the complex divinatory system, Ifa. Classified among the Seven African Powers, he is the patron of those who practice Ifa and cowrie shell divination. Orunmila is syncretized to Saint Francis, and so today is his feast, too. He is a miracle healer and a spirit of righteousness.

October 5

Mundus Patet

Today is the second of the three annual days when Rome's portal to Hades was formally opened so that ghosts could wander freely. Celebrate the goddess Mania and the Manes, as well as chthonic deities in general. Honor ancestors and the beloved dead. See [August 24](#) for details.

Spirit of the Day

LADY WISDOM

In her book *Isis Unveiled*, Helena Blavatsky, cofounder of Theosophy, which

literally means “Divine Wisdom,” described today as a feast of Holy Wisdom, under whatever names she is known, including Aura Placida. According to Blavatsky, during the early days of Christianity, this feast was transferred to two extremely obscure saints, Aura and Placida—and indeed, today is their feast. Other names for Holy Wisdom include Hokhma, La Sagesse, Lady Wisdom, and Sophia. Although some comprehend Holy Wisdom as a metaphor and an ideal, many others understand these to be divine beings (or one divine being with multiple names, depending on perspective), and so today is their feast. Today is also a day to honor adepts, scholars, and sages, and those who pursue wisdom.



October 6

Saint of the Day

SAINT FOY

Foy is an English version of *foie*, meaning “faith” in French. She is also known as Saint Faith, but “Foy” distinguishes her from the other Saint Faith, part of the trio of sister saints: Faith, Love, and Charity. Foy is also sometimes called Fides or Foie. Today is her feast.

A child martyr, after her death, Foy emerged as a powerful, miracle-working saint. Along with saints Philomena, Jude, and Rita, Foy is a saint of impossible causes. If she decides to do it, it will be done. There is nothing she is believed incapable of providing.

Foy’s primary shrine in Conques, France, on the road to Santiago de Compostela, was once an extremely popular pilgrimage site. Foy is the matron saint of travelers, prisoners, and military personnel. She is eternally twelve years old, the age she was at her death, and has a reputation as a bit of a prankster. If she’s performed a miracle for you—and today, her feast, is an excellent time to make requests—make sure to deliver promised offerings promptly or she may start playing tricks until you do. She doesn’t like to wait. In terms of offerings, in addition to the usual candles and incense, Foy likes shiny, sparkly, pretty things including jewelry.

October 7

Saints and Spirit of the Day

SERGIUS AND BACCHUS

Today is the feast of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, young nobles who were high-ranking legionnaires and secret Christians in the Roman army during the late third–early fourth centuries. The two lived and died together. When they refused to make offerings to Jupiter, they were tortured and martyred. Their popularity has grown in the twenty-first century, as they are now (unofficially) considered patron saints of the LGBTQ community and especially of those serving in the military. Sergius and Bacchus pledged themselves to each other, as well as Christ, claiming that in their union they had become one with Christ and each other. In the medieval era this was understood, at least officially, to be an expression of *agape*, the highest expression of brotherly love, but many modern devotees perceive this as an attempt to evade their true relationship.

The two saints together are the patrons of those who dwell in the desert, including people, animals, and plants, as well as mercenaries and hermits, and Christians living in Muslim nations. Sergius is also the patron saint of all those who work with anise in any capacity (see [below](#)), so offer them candles, incense, anisette, anise cookies and cake, and star anise.

Magical Uses of Anise

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) is not the same as star anise (*Illicium verum*), and the two have different, though sometimes overlapping, magical uses. They are also both important culinary and medicinal botanicals. Star anise derives from an East Asian tree and is a component of the culinary blend, Five Spice Powder. As its name indicates, it resembles a star. Anise, also called aniseed, is a flowering herb, native to the Mediterranean, southwest Asia, and Egypt. It somewhat resembles fennel. Both the fresh and dried herb are used magically, as are the seeds. For example, hanging leafy fronds of fresh anise on or around your bed while you sleep is not only fragrant but believed to have a magically revitalizing effect if you are feeling psychically rundown.

Anise is distilled into liqueurs, such as anisette, arak, ouzo, or Sambuca. Among the herbs incorporated into absinthe, it's also a primary component of Spirit Water, used to gently summon the dead. (See [February 21](#).) Anise has numerous magical uses: it summons and soothes the dead, revitalizes psychic energy, and attracts money and prosperity.

Star anise's taste resembles anise and is used to prevent nightmares and encourage positive dreams. Because it's beautiful, it is often strung into necklaces or other jewelry—its fragrance encourages serenity and healing on multiple levels. Grind it in a mortar and pestle to create incense. Request that Saint Sergius bless your anise, star anise, or any derivatives, such as Five Spice Powder or anisette. Request that he imbue them with additional healing or magical powers.

VICTORIA

Today is the Roman festival of Victoria, who, as her name indicates, is the goddess of victory, triumph, and success. Once an extremely popular goddess, she had numerous shrines, including one on the Palatine Hill. Victoria is envisioned as a winged woman, typically standing with one foot atop the globe. She carries the spoils of war—items taken from enemies or the defeated. Victoria has become closely identified with Nike, the Greek spirit, also known as Winged Victory, but she is more closely associated with military victory than Nike is. While Nike is a close companion of the goddess Athena, Victoria is venerated alongside Mars and Jupiter. Victoria is the matron goddess of soldiers, warriors, and those who battle. Request her blessings and protection. Rub Crown of Success Oil on a candle, dedicate it to Victoria, and burn it. (You'll find the formula in the [January 12](#) entry.)

October 8

Apple Pie Aphrodite Love Spell

This spell invokes Aphrodite's blessings for seduction or reconciliation. Apples are Aphrodite's sacred fruit. (See [August 19](#) for details of this goddess.)

1. Choose a beautiful apple.
2. Using a needle or similar sharp instrument, prick the apple all over. As you do so, hold the target of your spell's image in your mind, along with their name.
3. Sleep with this pierced apple between your thighs, as high up as is comfortable for you.

4. After you awake, smear the apple with honey and sprinkle it with cinnamon.
5. Place it on an altar dedicated to Aphrodite or, alternatively, if you prefer a spirit-free spell, place it on an altar of love, surrounded with romantic candles.
6. Once the candles have burned down, incorporate the apple into a small pie and feed it to your beloved.

Saint of the Day

PELAGIA

Today is the feast of Pelagia, who is the matron saint of actresses because she herself was one. The leading lady of the theater in Antioch in the early centuries of the Common Era, she lived a scandalous, independent life, publicly taking lovers as she pleased, and dressing in as little as she desired. An encounter with Bishop Nonnus left her in a spiritual crisis, after which she essentially surrendered herself over to him, confessing her sins and begging him to baptize her, which he did. She became his star convert, his trophy ex-Pagan.

Pelagia donated her fortune to the Church, chopped off her hair, and donned a monk's garb. Walking from Antioch to Jerusalem, she took up residence on the Mount of Olives. As she lacked a beard, the other hermits assumed she was a eunuch. Only after her death, when her body was undressed as part of funeral preparations, was Pelagia's secret revealed. No documentation of Pelagia exists outside of hagiographies, and some scholars believe that her legend is actually a metaphorical attack on the goddess Aphrodite.

"Pelagia" means "sea," and she is best venerated there. Pelagia is invoked by actresses for her blessings of success and protection. She is also invoked to heal and combat self-loathing and to see you through crises of faith and dark nights of the soul. Offer her seven small candles by the sea. Request her blessings and immerse yourself in the water seven times. If unable to visit the sea, reproduce the ritual in the bathroom: pour lots of salt in the bath and decorate with seashells.

October 9

Blue Flower Happiness Powder

To promote and maintain happiness and to counteract feelings of being blue, obtain as many blue flowers as you can: bluebells, cornflowers, delphiniums, and blue hydrangeas and irises, for example. If you can obtain these already dried, that's great. Alternatively, dry fresh flowers. A simple technique for drying plants is to hang them upside down from a wire hanger in a well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight. Keep some space between the plants. Once they've dried, grind them together to form a fine powder, along with some dried lavender. (Lavender is often blue but, for this particular spell, it does not have to be. The presence of the lavender empowers the other blue ingredients.) Once this is complete, sprinkle in corners of rooms, over thresholds, and wherever else you are inspired.

Spirit of the Day

FELICITAS

Today is the feast of Felicitas, Roman goddess of good fortune and happiness. Fortuna is the goddess of fortune, in general—either good or unhappy. Felicitas is exclusively associated with happiness, her name derived from the Latin *felix* or “happy.” Once a very popular goddess, she is associated with all sorts of happiness and success, from military luck and good health to easy conception, childbirth, and lactation. If Felicitas smiles on you, all is smooth sailing. Her emblems are the cornucopia, shared with Fortuna, and the caduceus, shared with Hermes. Her name is the root of the name Felicity and the greeting “felicitations.” Following Christianity's banishing of Paganism in Rome, the goddess was de-personified but preserved as an abstract concept. Felicitas is the matron goddess of those named Felix or Felicity. She may be venerated alongside Juno. Offer cornucopias, roses, and incense and request her blessings.

October 10

Old Michaelmas Day

Those who prefer to retain Julian calendar dates for spiritual events celebrate today, not September 29, as a feast honoring Archangel Michael. Alternatively,

those with unsatisfying experiences on the 29th, those unable to celebrate on that earlier date, or those who are great devotees of the archangel may use today as a second chance. Please see [that date](#) for further information. Anything recommended for the 29th applies today, too.

If you were unable to partake of goose on September 29, today is another opportunity. (And if you can't find a goose at the butcher or supermarket or it's prohibitively expensive or you're a vegetarian, consider a chocolate goose instead.) Some believe that today is the true day to stop harvesting blackberries and so may attempt to harvest any remaining, transforming the bounty into syrup or preserves or baking blackberry pies. Today is also an excellent day to craft or refresh the Archangel Michael Protection Packets found in the [May 8](#) entry.



October 11

The Meditrinalia

The Meditrinalia is a festival that honors Jupiter and the year's new vintage. It was the last wine festival of the Roman year. Libations are offered to the deities. Wine is honored for its role as a medicinal beverage. (Consider that, in earlier times and sometimes now, water was not always safe to drink.) After a libation to Jupiter, the year's new wine is tasted together with the older vintage—this was believed to have curative purposes.

International Day of the Girl

The purpose of the International Day of the Girl, as designated by the United Nations, is to raise awareness of the many issues faced by girls all around the globe and give them the tools for a better, more fulfilling future. In addition to any other activities planned, it is an opportunity to honor deities who manifest as girls or the many young girls who, following their deaths, became saints. Here are just a few of the multitudes of young girl saints: Agnes, Antonietta, Barbara, Foy, Joan of Arc, Lalla Solica, Lucy, and Philomena. Some of the most ancient goddesses are mythologically envisioned as girls: Anat, Kore, and her alter ego, Persephone.

Saints of the Day

ZENAIDA AND PHILONELLA, FRIENDS OF PEACE

Sisters Zenaida and Philonella were cousins of Saul of Tarsus, the future Saint Paul. Today is their feast day. As silverless physicians (meaning they refused payment for their services), hypothetically they require no offerings; however, charitable donations and good deeds in their honor will be met with gratitude. Legend recalls Zenaida as among the first to recognize psychiatric illnesses as actual illnesses and thus something that can be healed medically. As miraculous healers, the sisters may be invoked for any kind of health miracles you seek, whether for body, mind, or soul.



October 12

Saints and Spirits of the Day

THE BLACK MADONNA OF THE APPARITION

Our Lady of the Apparition or *La Aparecida* is the matron saint of Brazil, where her presence is ubiquitous. Today is her feast, and it's been a national holiday in Brazil since 1980. The Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in Aparecida, Brazil is, as of this writing, the second largest church on Earth, second only to St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

As with other Black Madonnas, her origins are mysterious. Her standard legend suggests that her statue was originally carved in seventeenth-century Portugal, intended as a conventional image of the Immaculate Conception. She was then lost and may have spent many years under water, as when she reemerged, the paint originally applied was gone, leaving the brown wood. (Other versions say she was carved in Brazil.) According to the most popular legend, La Aparecida reappeared when, on October 12, 1717, three fishermen in a boat on Brazil's Paraíba River, frustrated by their paltry catch, prayed to Mary for better luck. When they cast their nets, what emerged was a small headless statue. They cast their nets again and this time brought up a miraculously huge catch of fish—and the Madonna's head! A shrine was built for her, and La Aparecida quickly began performing miracles. Aparecida is syncretized to the equally beloved Oxum (Oshun), orisha of rivers and fresh waters. Like Oxum, Aparecida is a guardian of women and children. She heals all ailments and bestows fertility.

THE BLACK MADONNA OF THE PILLAR

According to legend, in 40 CE, when James the Greater (see [July 25](#)) was in Zaragoza, now in modern Spain, he beheld a vision of the Holy Mother with the Holy Child carried on a throne by angels. She gave him a small jasper pillar and a statue of herself, telling him that the place of their encounter would be her home. The traditional interpretation of the legend of the pillar is that it indicates that a church should be built at that site, as it eventually was. However, the legend takes place centuries before Marian veneration was authorized. Other interpretations suggest that it's more reminiscent of another holy mother, Lady Asherah, the Jewish goddess who was, at times, venerated in the form of a pillar. Alternatively, it may indicate vestigial memories of a Phoenician goddess, possibly also Asherah.

The Black Madonna of the Pillar housed in Chartres Cathedral has a different history, appearance, and identity. Please see [October 17](#).

James' vision is credited as the very first Marian apparition, especially unusual as it's believed that Mary was still alive at the time. Also, unlike most who see Marian apparitions, James actually knew Mary. The shrine James built

for her is considered the first church ever dedicated to Mary. The Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza, built atop older shrines, is, as of this writing, the ninth largest church on Earth. The 15-inch statue stands atop a jasper pillar. She holds the Holy Child in her arms, while a dove rests atop the Child's left palm. Legend says that the statue was carved by angels. Today, her feast, is the name day of those named Pilar. The Madonna of the Pillar is the matron saint of Spain's police department and, by extension, of law enforcement in general. She is requested to provide protection and healing.

FORTUNA REDUX OR FORTUNA THE HOME BRINGER

Today is another feast of Fortuna. Please see [January 1](#) for details of this Italian goddess. Today's feast celebrates *Fortuna Redux*: Fortuna's blessings of arriving home safely, as from a long or perilous journey. The symbols of this aspect of Fortuna are a globe and a rudder or steering oar, in addition to the cornucopia, her most traditional attribute. Today's date is the anniversary of Augustus Caesar's return to Rome in 19 bce from his adventures in the East. If you (or someone you love) are embarking on a journey that is potentially dangerous or returning from one, whether today or in the foreseeable future, request Fortuna's blessings of protection. She may also be requested to ensure your safe return home from extended hospital stays.

MARIA LIONZA

"Maria Lionza" is the name of a goddess, or possibly two, as well as the spiritual tradition named in her honor. Numerous myths and legends exist with varying degrees of overlap, but she is believed to derive from the Carib goddess Yara.

This goddess, who would become known as Maria Lionza, is typically envisioned as a beautiful indigenous Venezuelan woman, although she may manifest as a great snake or in other forms. A blue butterfly is her messenger. She is a Lady of the Beasts, who protects wildlife and wild nature from encroachment. After the Spanish conquest of Venezuela, attempts were made to syncretize her with Mary. She became known as *Santa Maria de la Onza* (Saint Mary of the Jaguar or the Puma), which evolved into Maria Lionza. After World War II, a second iconic image of Maria Lionza emerged. In this one she appears as a beautiful, brown-eyed woman who wears a crown and an elegant blue-and-white gown.

Although she may be venerated year-round, today is her feast. Offer her fruit, flowers, coffee, spring water, or champagne. Recreate a lush jungle atmosphere for her.

OSHUN

Because La Aparecida was fished from a river, the Yoruba orisha Oshun—or *Oxum*, her name in Brazil—is syncretized to her. Oshun is the orisha of fresh water including rivers. Because of the syncretism, many who say they are venerating La Aparecida actually mean that they venerate the once-forbidden Oshun in the guise of the church-blessed saint. Today is their shared feast. Please see [September 8](#) for more about Oshun.

October 13

The Fontanalia or the Feast of Fons

This annual Roman holiday honors Fons, the Lord of Springs. The Romans cast garlands into springs; however, their flower garlands bore no pesticides. Another of their traditions—placing garlands atop well-tops (as opposed to within the water)—may be preferable for modern times, unless you are sure that your garlands will not poison the waters. Visit wishing wells or work on behalf of the preservation and safety of fresh water.

October 14

Saint of the Day

PARASKEVA THE NEW

Several saints are named Paraskeva, which literally means “Friday.” The ancient, controversial one is celebrated on October 20. Today’s saint is currently the most famous of the saints bearing this name. She is called Paraskeva the New (c. 1000–c. 1027), perhaps because she is a more recent saint or perhaps to indicate that she is a replacement for the old, disreputable one. Also affectionately known as Saint Petka, she is invoked to heal and prevent migraine headaches.

Paraskeva the New is the matron saint of runaways, travelers, and spiritual pilgrims because she was one herself. An extremely devout child from what is now modern Turkey, she experienced an epiphany at age ten and began giving away her possessions to the poor. Her parents sought to control her, and she ran

away from home. She began a wandering spiritual life in Constantinople, now Istanbul, where she visited shrines and churches and depended on the kindness of strangers. Her parents sought to bring her home, but she always eluded them. Petka lived as a hermit beside the Black Sea for five years, before moving to Jerusalem, based on directions from an apparition of Mary. After some years there, an angel told her to return to Anatolia, where she died at age 27. Paraskeva the New is hailed as a great and generous miracle worker. Offer her white roses and fragrant candles and incense.

PETKOV DEN

In Bulgaria, where Saint Petka is very popular, today is *Petkovden*. heralding the winter season, today marks the time when the year's agricultural work and harvest must be complete. The twelve days between Petkovden and the feast of Demetrios on October 26 are known as the Twelve Wolf Days—a time to simultaneously honor wolves and protect against them. Women are traditionally forbidden from doing what was once described as women's work, especially sewing or needlework. It was believed that those who wore garments that had been sewn between Petkoven and Demetrios' day will sicken, die, and then transform into vampires.

October 15

Teresa of Avila

Saint Teresa of Avila—mystic, author, scholar, visionary, and first female Doctor of the Church—was born Teresa Sanchez Cepeda Davila y Ahumada (March 28, 1515–October 4, 1582). Now among the most beloved saints, she was, at first, an unlikely one. Unlike so many stories of early piety and devotion, young Teresa loved romance novels and pretty dresses. She entered a Carmelite convent at age twenty, but it was not a particularly austere one. Shortly after, Teresa fell ill. She understood this as having a spiritual cause—God was punishing her—although modern scholars think she may have suffered from malaria. She suffered fainting spells and experienced pain in her heart. She was sent to a sanitarium to recover, but her condition worsened. She fell into a three-day coma and was given up for dead. A grave was dug for her, but Teresa awakened, although she was now paralyzed, as she would remain for eight months. She recovered but would

remain in ill health until she was forty. Teresa credited Saint Joseph for her recovery. She returned to the convent, but she was not the same. Teresa began experiencing and exhibiting unusual spiritual activity. She had visions of angels and was seen to levitate. She would beg her fellow nuns to hold her down lest she levitate in public and cause a commotion. Teresa attracted the attention of the Spanish Inquisition and was periodically investigated, and although no action was taken against her, she remained controversial. She eventually founded her own, more austere order—the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelites. She traveled through Spain, founding convents and priories.

Teresa experienced a vision in which a seraph (fire angel) pierced her heart repeatedly with a flame-tipped spear. Although aware that it was a vision, she described the experience as excruciatingly painful. Now the matron saint of cardiac patients and those who've suffered or fear heart attacks or other heart issues, she is also invoked to heal and prevent migraines and headaches. Those under her matronship include mystics, lace makers, and realtors. Teresa is credited with inventing the now popular tradition of burying statues of Saint Joseph to help sell houses, although Teresa used medallions. She is also credited with the tradition of maintaining small personal images of Child Jesus, such as the Infant of Prague or El Niño. These images may be offered to her as altar images, along with flaming- or pierced-heart milagros, candles, and incense.

Oya

Oya is the Yoruba orisha of storms, hurricanes, and strong wind. She is a powerful witch, the only orisha willing to have contact with the dead. She is the owner of the cemetery, and offerings may be left for her at cemetery gates. Because she is identified with Teresa of Avila, today is Oya's feast, too. Oya oversees necromantic divination and communication with the dead. She may be requested to remove hauntings and ghosts. Oya is a spirit of justice and a great healer. Lung ailments are her specialty, and she is invoked to prevent miscarriage. Oya is the spirit of the Niger River.

The guardian of the marketplace and especially of women entrepreneurs, Oya is believed to bring prosperity and protection to stores and market stalls, especially those owned by women. To request her blessings, maintain an altar for her in the shop, tending it on Thursdays, her sacred day of the week. If it's not possible to maintain an altar, at least feature her colors (maroon and shades of purple) on the premises.

If you are afraid that you are about to be haunted—if you have misgivings about the nature of those who have recently died—signal your need for Oya by creating a piecework banner in nine distinct colors. Hang it over an altar dedicated to her.

Depending on location, Oya may be known as Yansa or Iansan. References to Santa Barbara Africana may indicate Oya, too. She is the guardian of morticians, cemetery workers, and death doulas, as well as librarians, archivists, meteorologists, spirit mediums, and women in the military. She may manifest as a beautiful woman or as an antelope or water buffalo. It's traditional to decorate her altar with horns, whether actual ones or horn-shaped items, such as cornucopias. She is venerated alongside Shango (see [December 4](#)) but has a contentious relationship with her sister orishas Yemaya and Oshun.

Oya's number is 9. She is associated with shooting stars, the dark moon, and the planet Uranus. Her colors are purple and maroon or combinations of nine colors. Her favorite offering is eggplant, but purple or dark varieties, not the white ones. Offer her nine eggplants or cut one into nine pieces. Other favored offerings are red wine, starfruit, smooth river stones, mullein, and purple fruits like grapes or plums.

October 16

Anisette Cleansing Spell

As today is National Liqueur Day, it's designated as a day to celebrate and explore liqueurs, sometimes called cordials. Many liqueurs, especially older ones, have their origins in magical and healing potions. Legend says that Italy's Strega Liquore, for example, derives from a witches' brew. It's now a popular offering for the goddess Diana. Absinthe invokes the presence of the Green Fairy, while anisette is the primary ingredient of Spirit Water, used to summon souls of the dead. (See [February 21](#).) Anisette is also used in a magical cleansing spell. In this particular ritual, one person performs the cleansing upon the person to be cleansed. The person doing the cleansing should themselves be cleansed before and after the ritual, although not necessarily by this method.

1. Place a fresh rosemary stalk into a dish and cover it with anisette. Use a reputable brand of anisette containing natural ingredients.
2. Have the person being cleansed lie down in a comfortable position. They may remain dressed, but their clothing should be loose and comfortable. As this is an aura-cleansing ritual, there's no need to touch the person's body.
3. While the rosemary is soaking, gently brush the person's aura, moving outward over their body, always away from the heart. You can also make protective signs over them, such as a pentacle or an ankh.
4. Remove the rosemary stalk from the dish, shaking off excess liquid.
5. Moving outward, away from the heart, from shoulders to fingers, hips to toes, very gently brush the rosemary stalk over the person's body. Have them turn over so that both sides may be cleansed.
6. When you're finished, let the person relax, while you dispose of the rosemary and the anisette outside, not within the home.

October 17

Saint Luke's Eve

Although it is not a date-exclusive spell, tonight, the night preceding the feast of Saint Luke, is believed to be the best time to cast this romantic dream spell. It may also be cast tomorrow or on any Friday night, but results are believed to be best and most accurate tonight. (See [October 18](#) for details about Luke.) This spell must be cast with dried wormwood plants. Never use essential oil of wormwood, as it is highly toxic. Dried wormwood is not often commercially available in stalks long enough to weave into wands, so obtaining it may take a little detective work, or, alternatively, grow and dry your own wormwood.

SAINT LUKE'S DREAM ORACLE

1. Weave wormwood stalks together to create a small wand, adding sprigs of marjoram, rosemary, and thyme. Depending how you craft it, the end result may resemble a lavender braid or an herb bundle.
2. Before going to sleep, light one end of the wand until it smokes. Holding

the other end, waft the smoke over yourself. You may do this for yourself or someone else can help.

3. Make sure the flames are out before going to sleep. Safely place the wormwood wand in a fireproof place.
4. Allegedly this ritual results in dreams of your true love. (It also provides spiritual cleansing and protection.)

The Black Madonna of the Pillar in Chartres

Chartres Cathedral in France, built atop a Druid sacred site, houses two Black Madonnas. Neither of the two statues are originals. The statue of Our Lady of the Underground now tucked away near a holy well is a nineteenth-century replica of one destroyed during the French Revolution. Our Lady of the Pillar, whose feast is today, is a sixteenth-century copy of a thirteenth-century statue. She reigns over a side chapel in the cathedral. Beloved by Crusaders, she may have been inspired by the original Black Madonna of the Pillar, whose feast is on October 12, although others argue that she is a veiled representation of Isis. Our Lady of the Pillar was the subject of a controversial 2017 restoration from which she emerged whitened. The Black Madonna of the Pillar in Chartres is believed able to grant any request and perform any miracle. Offer candles and incense. Reproductions and images are available, and she may be venerated on a home altar.

October 18

World Menopause Day

From a magical and metaphysical perspective, menopause is a time of immense power. It is no accident that older women were among those once most prone to charges of witchcraft. Many may find that, once well into menopause, a sort of mental switch turns on (or perhaps off) that encourages women to be bolder, more independent, and less concerned with the opinions of others. In ancient days, when biology and reproduction were not understood in the same way they are today, it was perceived that women who had passed the age of menstruation were now retaining their wise blood, and menopausal women were revered

elders and community leaders. Thus, menopause might be something to look forward to, rather than to dread.

As such, it's an excellent day to contemplate and celebrate elder goddesses, such as Baba Yaga, Nana Buruku, or the crone manifestations of Hulda or Berchta. You can also celebrate the menopausal women in your life or celebrate yourself. Those on the threshold of menopause might consider the best way for them to pass through that gate and make plans for using their enhanced esoteric powers.



Saint of the Day

SAINT LUKE

The historical Luke is widely believed to be the author of the *Gospel of Luke* and *Acts of the Apostles*. He himself was not among the original twelve Apostles but was instead a companion of Saint Paul. Of Greek ancestry, Luke may have been a slave, although a highly educated one. A healer, he is considered the first Christian physician. He remains a great healer, believed able to cure virtually any illness or disorder. Luke was also a gifted artist, and legend says that he created many of the world's Black Madonnas, such as Czestochowa, although most historians disagree. He is the patron saint of artists, physicians, healers, goldsmiths, brewers, jewelers, artisans, authors, bachelors, glassblowers, and butchers. Luke's symbol is the ox or bull, as seen in the lower left of *The World* tarot card, as drawn by Pamela Colman Smith, which features the emblems of all four evangelists. He is the patron saint of livestock, too, and making them work today is considered unlucky. As the old saying goes, "*On Saint Luke's Day, the oxen must play.*"

Luke is also among the subversive, magical saints, possibly because of his name. "Luke" references light. The saint absorbed functions associated with Apollo, Lord of Light, also a great healer and patron of the arts. Luke bestows second sight, prophetic dreams, and psychic as well as physical healing. If under psychic attack or if you feel infected by malevolent spiritual forces, ask Luke to heal and protect you. A dream spell associated with Saint Luke allegedly stimulates dreams of your beloved. Instructions are found in the entry for

October 17, but the spell may also be cast today, during an afternoon nap, or tonight.

October 19

Saint of the Day

EL NIÑO FIDENCIO

José Fidencio Sintora Constantino (October 17, 1898–October 19, 1938), born in Guanajuato, Mexico, first manifested miraculous healing powers in his childhood. (*El Niño* means “the boy” or “the child” in Spanish.) The first person he healed was his mother.

By the time he was in his twenties, Fidencio had already acquired an established reputation as an effective curandero. Around the age of twenty-nine, he experienced a mystical vision in which a sacred being, possibly Jesus or an angel, appeared to him, calling him to be of service and blessing him with enhanced powers. From then until his death, El Niño Fidencio demonstrated extraordinary abilities. He is credited with healing the terminally ill, restoring vision and hearing, and performing successful surgery without anesthesia. He delivered babies and cured mental illness. El Niño Fidencio healed via a combination of folk cures, herbalism, song, food, dance, and his own unique repertoire of remedies. He maintained a garden of over two hundred botanicals, which he incorporated into his medicines.

He also performed love spells for his clientele and mediated family and real estate disputes. He died under mysterious circumstances. Today, the anniversary of his death, is his feast.

Hailed as a saint, after his death, he continues to heal. He also visits devotees in dreams and visions and communicates via spirit mediums. *Fidencismo*, a Spiritualist movement centered on the teachings of El Niño, is now among Mexico’s official religions. However, most of El Niño Fidencio’s devotees are unaffiliated, independent practitioners. Offer El Niño Fidencio the flowers he loved, as well as perfumes and candles. If he performs a great miracle for you, a visit to his shrine in Espinazo to thank him is traditional. If this is impossible, donations on behalf of upkeep of the shrine is the next best thing. He was an extremely modest man, who would not take payment for his services in life, although he did sometimes accept gifts. He traditionally accepts extremely

modest offerings, if given with a sincere heart. El Niño Fidencio's color is purple. He may be venerated alongside Guadalupe and Saint Joseph, whom he loved.

October 20

Although nothing applies equally to every individual, metaphysically speaking, today is a lucky day. Two mysterious spirits of good fortune are at the peak of their power today, one associated with sun and sea (Ebisu) and the other with Earth mysteries (Paraskeva). Ideally, today is devoted to fun, even for those who are not devotees of Paraskeva. Eat well, sleep well, spend time in or near water, if that makes you happy. It's an excellent day for romance, weddings, and enjoying Earth's bounties, as well as preserving and protecting them.



Ebisu

Ebisu is a guardian of the morning sun, a spirit of happiness, good luck, and plentiful harvests from sea and land. Among Japan's Seven Spirits of Good Fortune (the *Shichi Fukujin*), he is also associated with Hiruko, the leech baby. Child of the primordial couple Izanagi and Izanami, Hiruko was born boneless, because of his parents' spiritual transgressions. By age three, still unable to stand, Hiruko was placed inside a little boat crafted from reeds and set adrift on the sea. Not only did he survive; he thrived and learned to walk, albeit with a telltale limp. Either Hiruko became Ebisu, or Ebisu is the man who found the limp baby and cared for him. Hard of hearing, don't whisper your prayers to him if you want to be heard. Speak loudly when seeking his attention or favors. Devotees in Osaka traditionally strike the walls of his shrine with a mallet to make sure he's paying attention.

Ebisu is the patron of fishermen, sushi chefs, and children. Envisioned as a smiling, beaming, bearded man wearing a tall black hat, he holds a fishing rod in one hand and a fish in the other, usually a lucky red sea bream. Sea bream (*tai* in Japanese) are among his sacred creatures, as are jellyfish, octopus, and pufferfish or *fugu*, a culinary delicacy that, if prepared incorrectly, can be fatal. Should you

ever encounter fugu poisoning, Ebisu is the sacred being believed able to counteract and heal it. He is a spirit of prosperity and happiness. His image, whether solo or with his friend and companion Daikoku, another of the Seven Lucky Spirits, is believed to generate good fortune. Offer him incense and pickled daikon radish.

Paraskeva

Paraskeva means “Friday,” and she is often referred to as Saint Friday. Friday is her sacred day, but she is, at best, a very unorthodox Orthodox saint, who predates Christianity. To distinguish her from Paraskeva the New, a good daughter of the Church (see [October 14](#)), today’s saint may be identified as Paraskeva the Muddy, perhaps because she is the Slavic goddess Mokosh, Mother Moist Earth in disguise. The sixteenth-century Stoglav Synod condemned veneration of Paraskeva, denouncing her as a forbidden “goddess of fate.” In 1589, the Patriarch of Constantinople banned Saint Friday rituals, but, as most devotees lived out in remote areas, these rituals persisted.

Today is her official feast, and it’s an extra potent day if it’s a Friday. Paraskeva is venerated on Fridays in general. Twelve is her sacred number, and she also has a twelve-Friday ritual, spread out throughout the year, which if followed, allegedly protects from all sorts of danger, especially natural disasters. Paraskeva is deeply involved with women, their lives, and with what was once widely considered women’s work, especially needlework and anything to do with fabric and textiles. Doing any kind of “work” is forbidden on Paraskeva’s sacred days. What Paraskeva considers work is any kind of needlecraft, sewing, mending, laundry, spinning, and knitting, as well as anything that disturbs the soil including tilling, plowing, even raking leaves. Anything that disturbs Earth is forbidden today. Paraskeva forbids cooking or cleaning.

So, what can you do? Dance, sing, have sex! Drinking and dining are encouraged, but no cooking or cleaning up afterward. Save that for tomorrow. (Unless it’s a Friday.) Women are encouraged to practice healing arts—it’s believed that Paraskeva has enhanced their powers today. You can heal with botanicals, but they must not be freshly picked today. Visits to therapeutic springs are encouraged. Getting married or giving birth today is considered extremely lucky. Paraskeva accepts offerings if they are handmade and crafted with love.

October 21

Saint and Spirit of the Day

FREYA

Freya, also spelled Freyja, is the golden goddess of the Norse pantheon, a star of Norse mythology. She has dominion over wealth, love, sex, pleasure, warcraft, witchcraft, women, magic, fertility, and glory. Freya is a title, literally meaning “Lady” and related to *frau*. Friday is literally Freya’s day; the English word *Friday* derives from her name. Thirteen is her sacred number, and Friday the 13ths are especially potent times to venerate her. Under the name Valfreya, she is the leader of the warrior death spirits, the Valkyries. They lay claim to half the fallen on the battlefield, who spend the afterlife in Freya’s beautiful realm. (The other half belong to Odin.)

Freya’s powers radiate through amber and honey. Her metal is gold. She travels in a chariot pulled by large gray cats. Usually envisioned as a beautiful woman, she is a skilled shapeshifter who can take any form. Today is not any kind of traditional Norse or Germanic feast for her, ancient or modern. However, because many perceive that Freya lies beneath the mask of Ursula, the goddess shares the saint’s feast by proxy. Freya is the matron goddess of jewelers, witches, practitioners of magic, shamans, rune casters, and those in the military. Communicate with her through the runes. The Elder Futhark, the oldest known runic alphabet, is divided into three groups of eight runes each. The groupings are known as aetts. The first aett belongs to Freya. Fehu, the very first rune, is also the first letter of Freya’s name.

No obscure goddess, Freya was immensely popular, worshipped through a wide swath of Europe. Her devotees clung to her long after Pagan traditions were forbidden. Those who continued to venerate her were branded as witches, and she became known as a Queen of Witches. Cats were killed in huge numbers because of their associations with Freya and witchcraft. Freya is a lover of luxury and will accept lush offerings. However, she will also accept modest ones if given with a good heart. Donations on behalf of wounded warriors or cats will also be appreciated.

URSULA

Saint Ursula is a mysterious saint with a convoluted legend. Here is its gist: Ursula was a fourth-century British princess, who was a Christian. In order to

avoid marrying the Heathen lord her parents had picked out for her, she fled by boat along with her companions. Ursula's ship's first stop was Rome, where the pope, who'd had a premonition that he would be martyred alongside a ship full of young women, abdicated and joined their journey. On the way back, they landed in Cologne, where they were betrayed and martyred, allegedly on this day in 383. Today is Ursula's feast.

How many young women accompanied Ursula? The standard number in her legend is 11,000, but it's theorized that a mistranslation of "eleven" led to this now widely accepted inflated figure. Ursula is the matron saint of orphans and female students. Although the most conventional French variant of her name is Ursule, Erzulie is another variant.

The Erzulie or Ezili spirits (see [June 9](#)) were initially identified with Saint Ursula, although they are now closely identified with aspects of Mary. Some theorize that Ursula is really the goddess Freya in disguise and that her companions are Valkyries.

No work involving wheels is traditionally done today. This once meant grinding or spinning but may now include driving. Spend the day in intellectual pursuits, if possible. Offer Ursula candles and incense, as well as donations on behalf of educating young women, especially where education is challenging for them to obtain.

October 22

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Iron is the metal of protection. Place an object beneath your pillow for protection against malicious or evil forces. Traditional sources suggest knives or scissors, but these potentially cause harm, which defeats the purpose. Try a horseshoe instead, or an iron bangle bracelet, or iron beads placed within a red silk or felt charm bag. These charm bags may be carried, too, or wear iron jewelry.

October 23

Dragon's Blood

Dragon's Blood (*Dracaena draco*), among the most popular magical ingredients, is a resin deriving from a species of Indonesian tree known as the Dragon Palm. Unlike most resins, it's red, hence its name. When burned, it can resemble blood. It may be burned as incense or pounded into a powder, which in turn can be used to create Dragon's Blood Oil and Dragon's Blood Ink. Dragon's blood is used for protection; spiritual cleansing; banishing and exorcisms; to draw love, luck, and wealth; and to enhance personal power. You can sprinkle a little dragon's blood powder atop candles intended to draw good luck to enhance their power, or over lottery tickets to enhance chances of winning. This may be done at any time but as it's the birthday of actress Emilia Clarke, born on this day in 1986, who embodied the character Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragons in the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, it's an excellent time to contemplate the mysteries of dragons and try to harness their magical power.

DRAGON'S BLOOD SPACE CLEANSING SPELL

Let the dragon banish bad vibes and negative entities, while inviting happiness within.

1. Grind dragon's blood, frankincense, sandalwood, and dried bay leaves together to form a coarse powder.
2. Place a pinch of powder atop a charcoal disc. (The small kind purchased in a pack of ten, *not* the large briquets used in grills and barbecues.)
3. Light it and, once it begins to smoke, carefully walk this through your space, wafting the smoke where needed. A censer may be used.



October 24

Spirits of the Day

ERINLE

Erinle is a spirit of earth and water, a master hunter in the bush *and* an underwater king. This multifaceted Yoruba orisha is a warrior, a healer, and a sacred physician. As he is syncretized to Raphael, Erinle shares the archangel's feast.

Erinle is present at mergers of salt water and fresh water. The source of Nigeria's River Erinle is near Oshogbo, site of Oshun's major shrine. According to a myth, Oshun was near the riverbank during her period of extreme poverty, when Erinle emerged in the form of a crowned handsome king. Entranced with each other, they wed, and he restored her to her position of wealth. Erinle is a spirit of prosperity and believed to be a source of financial wisdom. Request his advice and inspiration so that your finances will also improve. Although anyone may and does venerate Erinle, he is the special patron of those who identify as LGBTQ. Being born with an umbilical cord wrapped around an arm is a mark of Erinle's patronage. Erinle's emblems are fish and cowrie shells, both symbolic of wealth, as well as a fishing rod and a bow and arrows. Decorate his altar with smooth river pebbles. His number is 7 and his metal is gold.

ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL

Raphael, Regent of the Sun, is the archangel of healing. His name is translated as "Healer of the Lord" or "the Lord Heals." Depending on tradition, there may be three, four, seven, or more archangels. Regardless of number, Raphael is always included. He is venerated by Jews, Muslims, Pagans, and the unaffiliated. As one of three angels named in Scripture, Raphael is counted among Christianity's three archangel saints. Although the Vatican combined their feast days in 1969, so that Gabriel and Raphael now share Michael's feast on September 29, today is Raphael's original individual feast. The Ethiopian Church honors Raphael on the thirteenth day of each month. His emblem is a fish, a reference to his heroic role in *The Book of Tobit*.

Raphael is the guardian of healers of all kinds, including midwives, nurses, and pharmacists, as well as physicians, psychologists, and traditional healers. He is the special protector of those whose vision is impaired, whether actually or metaphorically. Raphael is the patron of those born under air signs (Gemini, Libra, Aquarius), as well as lovers, matchmakers, expectant mothers, and young people, especially those leaving home for the first time. However, Raphael will reputedly respond to anyone who calls to him sincerely. Raphael protects travelers and supervises guardian angels. If yours doesn't seem to be working to full capacity, direct complaints to Raphael. Angels traditionally do not require

offerings; however, candles and fine incense such as frankincense and myrrh are burned for Raphael. He is believed capable of healing any disorder, providing fertility, and banishing nightmares. While Archangel Michael is usually identified as the vanquisher and banisher of demons, Raphael is also a master.

SIMBI

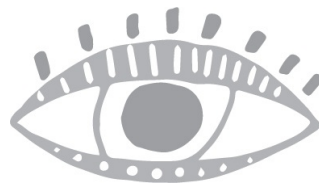
By extension, today is also the feast of the sorcerer-snake spirit, Simbi, who, depending on tradition, may be syncretized to the archangel. Like Raphael, Simbi is a master healer. Simbi knows the secrets of all plants and thus all botanical remedies. Offer him the liqueur Saint-Raphaël or *mahia* and other fruit brandies. Being born with ringlets or coiled hair may be a sign indicating Simbi's patronage. Toddlers who tumble into fountains and ornamental fishponds may also be Simbi's children. Simbi is syncretized to Moses and the Magi, as well as Raphael. More information may be found on [January 6](#), the Feast of the Three Kings.

October 25

Power of the Psalms

In addition to its identity as a religious text, the *Book of Psalms* has long been believed to radiate magic power. Each of the psalms has its own magical uses. Some are used for blessing, others for cursing. Some psalms encourage pregnancy, others reputedly prevent miscarriage. The *Book of Psalms* is published in numerous languages and may be found online. Miniature versions are intended as amulets, to be carried rather than read. Place one in your suitcase or handbag for travel safety.

The psalms are simple to put into magical practice. Merely read them, but don't skim or read by rote. Read them carefully, aloud or silently, with awareness of each word. Here are some suggested uses:



HEALING BY PSALM

Recite the 3rd Psalm over olive oil or other ingredients and then use it as a massage oil to relieve aches and pains.

HOUSE BLESSING OIL

Recite the 23rd Psalm over olive oil. Use this oil to dress candles to promote happiness in the home.

ANTI-NIGHTMARE SPELL

Recited the 4th Psalm before you go to sleep to protect you from nightmares, dangers of the night, and psychic attack.

PROTECTION PSALM

Recite Psalm 1 for self-protection, to remove yourself from dangerous or harmful situations, as well as to protect you against animal attacks. Add the 104th Psalm for extra protection.

SUPER PROTECTION PSALMS

In moments of extreme anxiety, begin reciting the Psalms, starting with the first and continuing in order. If you finish and are still afraid, start from the beginning again. If you are interrupted, pay attention to what you are reading at that moment—the words and which psalm. There may be a clue for you there, either in terms of what threatens you or what will remedy it.

October 26

National Pumpkin Day

Emblems of October, autumn, and Halloween, pumpkins are superb magical tools. They are also sacred to the orisha Oshun. (See [September 8](#).) Many devotees or those who have benefited from her blessings refrain from consuming pumpkin, especially the seeds, although they may make use of it magically or as an offering to Oshun. A pumpkin may be used as a communication device to petition Oshun:

1. Hollow out a small orange pumpkin.
2. Write your petition on a small piece of paper.
3. Smear the paper with some honey, remembering to taste the honey first, as one does with Oshun.
4. Place the honeyed paper within the pumpkin.
5. Sprinkle it with powdered cinnamon.
6. Hold a white, yellow, or golden votive candle in your hands, while focusing on your desired goals. You may reiterate your petition.
7. Place the candle inside the pumpkin, atop the paper, and burn it.

JACK-O'-LANTERN

The most seasonal thing to do with a pumpkin is craft a jack-o'-lantern from it. These carved lanterns were originally intended to shine a welcoming light for returning dead souls or ward them off, depending on orientation. As with so many American Halloween traditions, this derives from Ireland and other Celtic areas. Back in the Old Country, lanterns were carved from turnips. When nineteenth-century Irish immigrants in America encountered pumpkins, turnips were replaced. Pumpkins are larger and easier to carve. Turnip lanterns were frequently carried, but carved pumpkins are now most frequently placed by the front door. If using candle flame, make sure that jack-o'-lanterns are *always* supervised, lest fires break out or someone be harmed. Battery-operated candles now substitute. Painted rather than carved jack-o'-lanterns are now very popular.

In addition to jack-o'-lanterns, pumpkins are hollowed out so that their shells may be used to create magic lanterns for all purposes, from love spells to banishing. These are the basic instructions, although more elaborate versions also exist.

1. Hollow out a pumpkin and pat the inside dry with a towel.
2. Fill the pumpkin halfway with vegetable oil.
3. Write your petitions or the purposes of your spell on one or more small pieces of paper.
4. Fold the paper and place within the oil-filled pumpkin.
5. You can create cotton wicks by twisting cotton balls or you can obtain wicks from Judaica shops where they are sold for Hanukkah oil lamps.

Place one or more wicks within the pumpkin.

6. Reaffirm your petition or spell and light the wicks.

Do not fill the pumpkin to the top, as flames may rise high and it's not safe. For additional fire safety, place the pumpkin inside a Pyrex dish or a large iron cauldron. If you find pumpkins unwieldy or if they are out of season, you can create a magic lantern from any fireproof, uncovered container.

Saint of the Day

SAINT DEMETRIOS

Demetrios, a soldier saint, is a frequent companion of the more famous Saint George. Bulgarian folk tradition suggests that the two are twin brothers. Demetrios is popular in the Orthodox churches, and today is his Orthodox feast day. Demetrios wears the armor of a Roman soldier and rides a red horse. The Church of Saint Demetrios in Thessaloniki, Greece is built on the site where Demetrios is said to have been imprisoned and executed. Demetrios is usually portrayed holding a spear, the instrument of his execution. Despite his military appearance, Demetrios is the patron of farmers and those who till the earth. Saint Demetrios rides through the sky on his red horse today, heralding the approach of winter.

Today is the last of the Twelve Wolf Days that began on October 14.

October 27

Lucky Black Cat Candle

An old superstition says that a black cat crossing your path brings bad luck, but black cats are also associated with good luck. An entire genre of early twentieth-century British lucky postcards, charms, and objects features "lucky black cats." Today is Black Cat Appreciation Day, an annual commemorative day founded by Cats Protection, a UK animal charity. Today's celebration is distinct from that of August 17 but observed in similar fashion, whether mundane or magical.

Black cat-shaped candles are burned to encourage good luck. Easily found for sale in both online and brick-and-mortar witch supply shops, they are also

easily crafted using molds and Melt-and-Pour wax. Scratch your affirmations, wishes, and intentions into the wax and burn. You can also enhance their power by rubbing with Black Cat Oil. See [January 17](#) for the formula.



Days of the Dead

October 31 is the Day of the Dead, but in some communities, Day of the Dead festivities begin before that date. Different communities possess different traditions, but October 27 is frequently dedicated to the forgotten dead—those who lack family members or loved ones to welcome them home. Typically, offerings of bread and water are placed outside for them, not within the home. This is the equivalent of placating the Manes. (See [February 21](#).) It's best to offer them something to prevent them from becoming rowdy, destructive hungry ghosts but not anything so satisfying as to encourage them to stay with you long term.

October 28

Days of the Dead

Although different communities observe different traditions, many dedicate October 28 to those who died violently or by their own hands. The dead who are honored today are not necessarily *your* dead. The souls of those who have died abruptly or through violence may be troubled, especially if they have not received justice. Efforts are made to placate these souls, so that they do not become angry, destructive ghosts. You may have loved ones and family members who fall into this category. It is up to you to decide whether to honor them today or on November 2 or both. If they are not your dead—if these souls are strangers or unconnected to you—leave offerings outside in the manner of October 27's forgotten souls.

The Isia

The Roman Feast of the Isia, dedicated to the goddess Isis, begins today and continues through November 1. Beyond the dates, no details of this festival survive; however, it is a highly appropriate time to give thanks to Isis and honor this goddess. Please see [March 5](#) for information regarding Isis.



Saints of the Day

SAINT JUDE

Two of the twelve original Apostles were named Judas. Judas Iscariot gained infamy as the one blamed for betraying Jesus. For many centuries afterward, the second one, Judas Thaddeus, fell into obscurity. Afraid they might be invoking the wrong Judas, many preferred to send their pleas and prayers to fellow Apostles Peter, Andrew, or James instead, who became immensely popular saints with numerous churches, locations, and children named in their honor. According to legend, Judas Thaddeus, who deeply wished to join the other miracle-working saints, became so frustrated with his lack of appeals that he vowed to help with *any* sincere request, provided it wasn't illicit or immoral. The only offering he seeks in return is public acknowledgment of the miracle—essentially spreading the word, so that others will also seek his aid.

Thus was born the first of the saints of the impossible causes. Still called Judas Thaddeus in many regions, in the English-speaking world his name was abbreviated to Saint Jude, perhaps to further distance him from Judas Iscariot. When something seems impossible—if other saints and spirits have let you down—direct your requests to Saint Jude but be sure to publicly acknowledge him afterward. Today is his feast. If Saint Jude has granted favors to you this year or you hope that he will in the future, this is a good day to acknowledge the miracle-working powers of this saint. Saint Jude can reputedly do anything. There is no miracle that is said to be impossible for him to provide.

Jude is distinguished by the large gold medallion he wears. He is frequently portrayed with flames emerging from his brow, interpreted as the flame of enlightenment. His color is green. In life, Jude was reputedly a powerful exorcist

and healer.

Offerings on behalf of alleviating the pain and suffering of others are highly appropriate, for example to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, founded by comedian Danny Thomas in honor of Saint Jude. Jude accepts candles and incense in the manner of any other saint. Whatever other offerings you might give to him, if he assists you, you must publicly acknowledge the miracle. The key word is "publicly." Telling a friend in confidence of your spiritual experiences is not enough. No need to go into detail—a simple "Thank you, Saint Jude, for favors received" posted where anyone may read it will suffice. A ritual exists to catch Jude's attention:

Calling Saint Jude

1. Every day for nine consecutive days, place a bunch of fresh basil in water in front of an image of Jude. Accompany this with prayers and petitions. Tears probably won't hurt, either.
2. Basil wilts very quickly, and so you will need a fresh bunch daily.
3. Burn one small green votive candle each day. Alternatively, burn one large green nine-day novena candle.
4. Do not eat the basil after you have removed it from before Jude's image. You can cook with it if you will donate the finished meal to a food kitchen or similar. Otherwise, place the basil outside.

SAINT SIMON

Even at his most obscure, Jude was not the most mysterious and shadowy of the original Apostles. That would be Saint Simon, who shares Jude's feast and may be venerated alongside him. Allegedly they were good friends in life and remain so centuries after their mortal deaths. Like Jude, Simon was a relation of Jesus. Depending on theological interpretations of Jesus' family, Simon is either his cousin, his half-brother, stepbrother, or even his full brother.

Just as there were two Apostles named Judas, so there were two named Simon. The first has become so identified with his nickname "Peter," the Greek equivalent of "Rocky," that few recall that his true first name was Simon. The second is identified as either Simon the Zealot or the Canaanite. "Canaanite" is a mistranslation of *Kananaïos*, a transliteration of a Hebrew word better translated as "zealous." In the context of first-century Judea, the place and era when Jesus and the Apostles lived, this did not indicate religious fervor. Instead it was the

name given the Jewish revolutionaries who aggressively resisted Roman rule.

Italian folk magic considers Simon a witch-doctor saint. He is traditionally invoked before going to sleep, so that he will send prophetic dreams, especially those that will reveal winning lottery numbers. Folklorist and author Charles Godfrey Leland suggested that this might indicate conflation with Somnos, an old Italian sleep deity. Folk tradition recommends addressing prayers to Saint Simon at midnight for a minimum of three consecutive nights. Be very clear what you seek from him, as he is a brusque saint. Be prepared: he is a master of disguise and may not appear in the form you expect. If and when he appears to you, whether as an apparition or in dreams, he will bluntly ask what you want. You must be able to articulate this clearly, concisely, and immediately or he will vanish. Simon is not a people-pleaser, like his old friend Jude. He may grant your wish, but if he disapproves or even if you just aggravate him, he allegedly delivers a resounding slap to the face before vanishing. If you seek his advice, tonight would be an excellent time to begin the ritual.



October 29

Bastet

Any day devoted to cats is a day to celebrate Bastet, the most famous and beloved cat goddess, and today is National Cat Day. Request that she protect the cats of the world at this time and all times. Please see [August 8](#) for more information about this Egyptian goddess.

SEKHMET

Cats come in various sizes but not that many shapes. Big cats like lions, tigers, and jaguars are recognizably cats in the manner of domestic pets and familiars. National Cat Day is a good time to celebrate any and all of them. Although not linked to any ancient festival or Egyptian tradition, today serves as an opportunity to honor Sekhmet, the lion goddess, who has been interpreted as

Bastet's alter ego or sister spirit. She may be asked to guard the cats of the world, large and small, wild and domestic.

Sekhmet, Great of Magic and Lady of Terror, radiates the fierce, blinding power of the sun at full strength. She is among the manifestations of the fiery Eye of Ra. If Bastet represents warm, sunny days, Sekhmet is the searing midday sun that forces even sun worshippers to seek shade. Her name derives from a root word interpreted as meaning "to be strong, mighty, or violent." She is a goddess of justice, retribution, and healing. Sekhmet brings diseases and is credited with causing wind-born plagues and epidemics, but she is also a master healer. Her priests were once the finest physicians in Egypt. She may be asked to heal any illness, other than eye disorders (but those are the specialty of many other sacred beings). She is strongly associated with blood disorders, and will heal menstrual and reproductive disorders, but pregnancy itself is not under her domain, perhaps because the ancient Egyptians did not perceive it as a medical condition. Most spirits and saints must be asked before they will heal, not because they are unwilling, but perhaps because the request serves as an activation or go-ahead. Sekhmet is unusual in that regard, as numerous people attest to receiving spontaneous healings from her in dreams and during visionary experiences.

Reminder: the days approaching and surrounding Halloween may be dangerous for cats, as they are frequently victimized by those who misunderstand this season as an excuse for horrible behavior. People are warned to keep black cats safely indoors throughout October, but any cat may face danger. Today is the day before Mischief Night; keep cats inside, if possible, until at least November 2.

Sekhmet's color is scarlet, and her element is fire. She may be venerated alongside Bastet, but also numerous other Egyptian deities including Thoth, her husband Ptah, and her son Nefertem, Lord of Perfume. Offer her beer, by itself or blended with pomegranate juice or syrup.

October 30

In many communities, tonight serves as a sort of prelude to Halloween. It's a night for pranks, although that word is deceptively lighthearted. Halloween is Treat Night, so, by extension, tonight emerged as Trick Night.

Mischief Night

The night before Halloween goes by many names, depending on locale. It's Mischief Night where I grew up. Other names include Devil's Night, Cabbage Night, Trick Night, Damage Night, and Punkie Night. Common tricks include covering trees, shrubbery, and buildings with toilet paper and smashing pumpkins and jack-o'-lanterns. (Bring yours inside overnight if you feel they're vulnerable.) In parts of New England, tonight is Cabbage Night, believed to derive from the old Irish folk tradition in which young women would pull up fresh cabbages to determine the nature of their future husbands. What to do with all the leftover cabbages? Well, apparently some began throwing them at their neighbors' houses, perhaps initially in fun, but not anymore. There are not as many cabbage patches anymore, and so hurling cabbages has given way to throwing eggs.

In the twenty-first century, Halloween is so resolutely associated with witchcraft and magic—and, for some, horror and gore—that many are now unaware that the “Hallows” in All Hallows Eve refers to saints. Halloween is another way of saying All Saints Eve. Possibly that dedication to saints initially encouraged the evolution of tonight into Devil's Night.

Mischief Night does not exist everywhere. In some places, tonight is just the night before Halloween without any of its own customs. If you're traveling or in an unfamiliar area, it's best to learn whether Mischief Night is celebrated and in what ways before nightfall. Bring animals inside. Some regions have age-related curfews. It may be best to stay inside tonight and watch something instead. Some suggestions: Devil's Night looms large in the 1994 movie *The Crow*, and “Devil's Night” is the fourth episode of the TV series *American Horror Story: Hotel*; serial killers join to celebrate on this night.

PISHOQUERY

Some historians believe that aspects of Mischief Night—throwing rotten eggs, surreptitious trickery—derive from the Irish tradition of *Pishoguary*. The basis of Pishoguary is the belief that luck and good fortune are not infinite, but limited. This is not a common, worldwide belief. Most suggest that there is enough good fortune to go around and that the success of one person does not

deprive another. Pishoguery disagrees. This breeds resentment and anger.

Pishoguery is a form of malevolent magic that relies on creation of a *piseog* or *pishogue*. The word is also a diminutive for *vagina*, but in our context references a spell intended to cause misfortune and the object that is the instrument of the spell. Some organic item (an egg, raw meat, a menstrual rag) is hidden and left to rot on someone's property. That item is the pishogue. As it rots and deteriorates, so does the good fortune of that property. Effects are believed to include illness, financial loss, and diminished fertility, both literally but also in terms of any kind of creativity. It is similar to the Evil Eye but always deliberate. This was originally rural magic, so livestock were affected, but any resident of the property, pets as well as humans, are potentially victims.

Pishoguery may be counteracted by finding and removing the object as quickly as possible. Never touch it with your hands or bare feet. Depending on its size, use tongs, a spade, or a shovel to remove it. Dispose of this tool together with the pishogue, ideally in the far corner of an open field. Burn the pishogue, but not on your property. Some recommend first sprinkling it with Holy Water. Prevention may be the best defense: shamrocks are believed to counteract Pishoguery.

CABBAGE NIGHT LOVE ORACLE

Choux or cabbage is a French endearment, and cabbages have long associations with romance. Although this is a romantic oracle, it's also an old Halloween party game. It's supposed to be fun and done with a group of friends. This is really a Halloween spell, originally intended to be cast tomorrow night, but as tonight is so closely identified with cabbages and because Halloween in the cabbage patch is one step away from Linus waiting for the Great Pumpkin, it works well tonight, too.

Traditionally, participants were blindfolded and set loose in a cabbage patch with someone left to supervise and make sure that no one gets hurt. The goal is to pick one—and only one!—cabbage. This cabbage is your oracle. Once it's been unearthed, analyze it. Do not clean it or shake off any dirt first. Interpreting the cabbage's appearance is believed to reveal details of your true love: roots packed with dirt foretell a wealthy suitor. The size and shape of the cabbage and its stem allegedly reveal salient facts of your lover's anatomy. The taste of the cabbage heart foretells your lover's temperament.

If you're happy with this cabbage, set it by the front door to guide your lover to you. But if you don't like it, don't keep it. Don't bring the cabbage home. Chop it into small pieces and leave it at a crossroads or feed it to an animal.

GRAIN MYSTERIES

In this season of the harvest, the season when we contemplate death, we also contemplate the mysteries of grain. Under the Christian façade of Hallowtide lie ancient grain mysteries. The tradition of distributing bread and cakes during these days is widespread. In Portugal, children beg for *Pão de Deus* (Bread of God) on All Souls Day. In Hungary, All Saints *Kalacs*, a type of cake, is distributed to beggars at cemetery gates. Doing so is believed to prevent the dead from rising. In the British Isles, these were days to go a'souling for soul cakes.

Today is an ideal time to bake soul cakes, which, in addition to tasting good, have many traditional uses. One is as offerings to the dead along with suitable libations, such as wine or other spirits. (But if your dead are teetotalers, offer milk or whatever you think would be appreciated.) Frequently done on All Soul's Day, I've placed a recipe here, for the convenience of those who would like to use them as Halloween offerings for their own beloved dead.

Soul Cakes

In the British Isles, soul cakes were traditionally baked and distributed to the poor. In a precursor to modern trick-or-treating, the needy or *soulers* would go a'souling—meaning that they would go door to door singing souling songs and proffering blessings, receiving, in return, small treats such as fruit, soul cakes, or coins. There are numerous variations depending on region. Sometimes children appeared at the door, rather than the poor, and, in some places, these children would wear costumes.

Why are they called “soul cakes”? Not just to feed a poor living soul, but also because there is a tradition of offering these cakes to the souls of the dead. It's likely that the crosses traditionally drawn on soul cakes were intended to sanction a previously Pagan custom.

By modern American standards, this is not a “cake” so much as a lightly spiced biscuit or a spice cookie. Numerous variants exist, often based on regional differences or the generosity of a household, some more traditional and some humbler than others. The recipe that follows is my own, but please vary to suit your taste. I use milk to create the dough, as it suits modern palates, but old recipes may suggest using apple cider or even apple cider vinegar instead.

In my own experience, this recipe creates approximately twenty-four soul cakes, but quantity depends on how large or small you make them.

INGREDIENTS

2¼ cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking spice*

1½ sticks butter

¾ cup sugar

3 egg yolks*

½ cup currants

Sufficient milk to form pliable dough

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F.
2. In a medium bowl, sift the flour and baking spice together and set aside.
3. In a larger bowl, using a hand mixer, blend butter and sugar until fluffy.
4. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating until thoroughly combined.
5. Add the flour mixture and blend until a dry dough forms.
6. Stir in the currants.
7. Add milk, a little at a time, until a softer, rollable dough is achieved.
8. Roll the dough out to whatever thickness you prefer and, using a round cookie cutter or the top of a glass, cut it into round shapes.
9. Traditionally, using a sharp implement such as a skewer or a toothpick, you would create a cross-shaped groove on top. However, you can omit this stage or, if you prefer, substitute other shapes, such as pentagrams, hexagrams, runes, or initials.
10. Place the cakes on a greased or lined baking sheet.
11. Bake for approximately twelve minutes or until the soul cakes turn golden.
12. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack.

October 31

The veil between the worlds is at its sheerest and most permeable on this date, especially after sundown. Gates to other worlds are open. The fairies ride tonight, as do ghosts, ancestral spirits, and the Wild Hunt. This is the third of the Three Spirit Nights, and like the others (Beltane and Midsummer), it is a fire festival that may be celebrated with bonfires. Substitute a hearth fire, a fire pit, candles, or a flame in a cauldron but always be aware of fire safety.

All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day follow each other in rat-tat-tat fashion. For those who celebrate, the three similarly themed holy days merge into each other. Some consider them not three separate holidays but one three-day event, known as Hallowtide, a commemoration of the dead beginning today and ending on November 2.

By whatever name you call tonight, many consider it the single most magical night of the year, the ideal time for any kind of spell or ritual. Tonight is an excellent opportunity to charge, consecrate, or inaugurate the use of any magical tools from wands to tarot decks to rune sets and spirit boards. This is the perfect night for spirit communications. In earlier days, the entire twenty-four-hour period beginning at nightfall on October 31 was considered to belong to the

spirits, but eventually this was “officially” abbreviated to end at sunrise on November 1, although whether spirits agree or will be cooperative is subject to debate. Even if you have no other plans, take a few minutes after sundown to absorb some of the rampant magical energy.

Tonight is potentially a time for revelry, masquerading, and trick-or-treating, but it’s also a night to commune with loved ones and ancestors who have crossed beyond the veil. Call the names of your loved ones who have passed or toast them, because what is remembered lives. It’s the perfect time to honor ancestors and chthonic deities—those spirits who are associated with underworld realms, frequently, though not always, realms of death.

All Saints or All Hallows Eve

Another word for “saint” is “hallow,” thus All Hallows Eve is another name for All Saints Eve. The date of our present Halloween may not have been set until the Church established this day as All Saints Eve. Before that, feasts of the powerful dead were celebrated at various times: at this time of year or others and at the dark or full moon nearest to this day, for example.

Those born today are believed to possess psychic capabilities. In the words of Sir Walter Scott, from his novel *The Monastery*, “*Halloween bairns see far.*”

Days of the Dead

In some Latin American traditions, today is a day to honor children who are deceased, both beloved family members and children who may have no one to celebrate their memory. Give appropriate offerings.

Halloween

The name Halloween derives from All Hallows Eve, meaning that tonight is the eve preceding All Saints Day (All Hallows Day). Technically, this holiday

begins after sundown, but for many all day—even all month!—is Halloween. Activities for children are frequently held in the daytime, especially parties, costume parades, and trick-or-treating. Trick-or-treating evolved from the medieval practice of “souling”—the traditional practice of going door to door begging for a soul cake and in return singing devotional songs intended to benefit the souls of the givers and their loved ones.

Samhain

Modern Halloween practices derive from those brought to the Americas by nineteenth-century Irish immigrants. Those traditions are rooted in the ancient pre-Christian Irish festival of Samhain. The word is not pronounced “sam-hain” but “sow-en,” with the first syllable sounding like the English word for a female pig, not the farming term.

There is no “dark god” named Sam Hain. The ancient pre-Christian Irish calendar was divided into halves: the bright half of the year, beginning at Beltane (see [April 30](#)); and the dark half, inaugurated at Samhain.

The harvest is over, and the cold is coming, if not already here. It is a time for venerating ancestors, divination, storytelling, and survival. Because it is the threshold of a new cycle, the night is considered ideal for oracles foretelling what to anticipate in the future—either until next Samhain or until Beltane. The actual astronomical Samhain is not a fixed date but is calculated to occur at the midpoint between the equinox and the solstice. Depending on tradition, Samhain may also be celebrated as an entire lunar month, starting at the dark moon in October and continuing until the following dark moon.

Concerned about ghosts? Bury apples at crossroads at midnight on Halloween to placate revenants, especially those who may have a bone to pick with you.

Samhain is one of ancient Ireland’s four annual fire festivals, along with Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnasadh. Related holidays were held throughout the British Isles, including Allantide (Cornwall), *Noson Calan Gaeaf* (Wales), and *Hop-tu-Naa* (Isle of Man).

SAMHAIN DOWN UNDER

There is a harvest aspect to Samhain, applicable only to the Northern Hemisphere. Those in the Southern Hemisphere who identify strongly with this aspect may reverse holidays: celebrating Beltane tonight and Samhain on May Eve, so that it better reflects their climate and reality. However, the magical aspects of the holiday, as opposed to its roots in agricultural activities, permeate the date, regardless of location and weather. Ghosts who walk tonight are not stopped at the equator. They wander where they will. Celebrate what is most relevant and resonant for *you* in any combination. Beltane is also a night of tremendous spirit activity and magical energy. Elements of the two festivals are easily combined.

Halloween Crossroads Cleansing Spell

Cast a spell in plain sight. This is potentially a very discreet spell, especially tonight. It requires some small change (coins), candies, and four little paper bags, the type intended as small packets of Halloween treats, plus a little privacy. Tonight is the best night for this spell, but it may be cast at other times, too, although possibly not as discreetly. The first three bags are for the spiritual cleansing. The last is a payment to the anonymous spirits of the crossroads who are at the peak of their power tonight and who will complete the cleansing. If you like, you can dedicate the spell to a specific Master of the Crossroads, such as Hermes or Papa Legba.

1. Place a handful of candy and a bunch of small change into each paper bag. Don't count out the number of coins and sweets; just grab a handful. Don't use chocolate, as this will end up outside, and chocolate may harm dogs.
2. Set one bag aside. This is the "clean" bag.
3. Rub the other three bags over your body, one at a time, focusing on removing anything negative or toxic that clings to you. Rub in a direction moving away from your heart, so from your shoulders, down your arms and fingers, for example.
4. If you have done this naked, now get dressed. Place the three bags used for cleansing in one pocket and place the single unused bag in your other pocket, so that they are separate. It's important to remember which is the clean bag.

5. The next part of the spell may be done while accompanying trick or treaters, walking your dog, or just venturing out for a walk. Walk for a bit in a random, circuitous way until you come to a four-way crossroads that is not too close to your home.
6. Circumambulate around the crossroads. As you approach the first corner, drop one of the three used bags. Walk toward the next corner and drop the second. At the third, let fall the last of the used bags. Then at the last corner, drop the clean bag. Do not turn around during this process. If someone notices and calls out to you, don't respond. Essentially, if you pick up any of the bags, you are voluntarily taking your troubles back and they will be even harder to lose.
7. Return home via a circuitous route, rather than retracing your steps exactly.

Once upon a time, at least up until World War I, Halloween was a romantic holiday to rival Valentine's Day. It's still an excellent night for romance and romantic rituals. For example, should two (or more) lovers share one apple at the stroke of midnight, their happy love life is said to be assured. (Originally, this spell promised marriage within the year, but in the twenty-first century, many prefer "happiness" to the ties that bind.)

Halloween Love Spell

This old folk spell requires four dried pumpkin seeds and a dried unbroken goose wishbone. It assumes that the spellcaster had access to a Michaelmas goose (see [September 29](#)). Back in the day, people fought for possession of that wishbone. That's the traditional spell. If unavailable, try your luck with a turkey or chicken wishbone or perhaps even a wooden or metal one, such as a wishbone charm.

1. Write one letter on each of the four seeds so that together they spell L-O-V-E.
2. Place the seeds along with the wishbone atop the head jamb of a door—they are small and so will not be readily visible.
3. In days of old, this served as an oracle: the first person to pass through the door at midnight on Halloween or immediately after was allegedly the one you would marry. Why leave important things to chance? If everyone participates willingly, it's a lovely romantic ritual. Alternatively, it serves as

a love or marriage spell: make sure the right one passes through the doorframe.

Wishbones are associated with wishing. Although the original version of this spell focuses on love, adapt it to fulfill any wish. Just make sure that the letters on the seeds reflect your true desire. For example, use C-A-S-H for a money spell. See if you can break your wish down into four letters, but if not, add pumpkin seeds as necessary.

Dumb Suppers

Although dumb suppers may be held on any night throughout the year (see [March 31](#)), tonight is widely believed to be the ideal time. Numerous variations exist, and they are conducted for many reasons: as a type of silent séance to commune with the dead or summon them or, alternatively, as a form of romantic divination, typically to enable young women to catch a glimpse of future husbands. Romantically inclined dumb suppers are sometimes characterized as “parlor games,” but that trivializes the ritual. Until not very long ago, many women’s futures were dependent on their spouses or even on having one, and so this divination served to inform a woman of what kind of a life she might expect to lead or warn her of pitfalls to avoid.

There are many ways to hold a dumb supper—feel free to improvise. There is only one requirement for a dumb supper: it must be *dumb*. In this context, “dumb” is not a synonym for “stupid” but for “mute,” as in the phrase “deaf, dumb, and blind.” Dumb suppers *must* be conducted in complete silence from beginning to end. Uttering even a syllable effectively terminates the ritual.

1. The simplest dumb supper involves a table set for two, although only one of the participants is alive. Extend an invitation to a specific loved one from beyond the veil or perhaps someone who, although they are dead, has information you seek. You can do the serving, or another person may do so. Set the table appropriately for your guest, at whatever level of elegance you deem best. I recommend dimming electric lights and keeping lit candles on or near the tables. You may “converse” with your guest silently in your head or just keep your mind clear and await sudden insights or eureka moments. Keep an eye on the candle. A low, bluish flame may indicate the presence of a ghost.
2. Dumb suppers may be held in larger groups. This can be done as a type of

potluck, with each living attendee bringing a dish intended to attract and honor their beloved dead. Alternatively, an elegant table may be set, perhaps even in a private room of a restaurant, where waitstaff can attend the needs of diners.

3. Old etiquette books once insisted that there be an equal number of men and women at formal dinner parties. Likewise, some believe that numbers of dead and living guests must match, however, adapt this to your own needs. You may wish to parlay with several family members at once (but remember, if they didn't like each other while alive, don't assume they'll get along better in death).

Tips for dumb supper success:

- Remember to set places for all attendees, visible *and* invisible.
- You may wish to set some extra places, just in case more than one guest arrives.
- Dumb suppers are often, but not always, conducted backward. There are many who would consider this an additional defining component of the ritual in addition to silence. What does backward mean? Again, that varies. Some reverse place settings with cutlery and glasses on the opposite side of etiquette rules. This symbolically indicates that the supper occurs in the liminal zone or on the reverse side of the mirror. Some serve the meal backward, beginning with desert. Others reverse everything they possibly can: chairs are turned around with their backs facing the table, tablecloths are laid inside out, diners may even attempt to eat with their nondominant hands. Anything that you understand as backward or reversed may be incorporated in any combination.

Spirits of the Night

FAIRIES

Halloween is one of the three great annual fairy festivals, alongside May Eve and Midsummer's Eve. (See [April 30](#) and [June 23](#).) Fairies may be classified into two groups: those who are solitary and those who are not. Sociable fairies emerge from fairy mounds in great numbers on the fairy festivals. This is known as trooping or, as many may ride on horseback, a cavalcade of fairies, from *cheval*, the French word for "horse."

Tonight is considered an ideal time to engage with fairies or attempt to see them. (Avoid solitary fairies, as they may not wish to be disturbed.) Changeling-reversing rituals may be accomplished tonight.

A Scottish ritual oracle intended to be performed tonight exploits the fairies' love of shiny objects and finery in order to help save lives.

1. Be sure to be seated on a three-legged stool at a three-way crossroads at midnight.
2. Maintain silence and listen intently: allegedly you will hear voices intoning the names of those fated to die before next Halloween.
3. This destiny isn't final: these fates may be averted by returning to this crossroads with gifts for the fairies, one gift in exchange for each person you seek to protect.

HEKATE

This magical Queen of the Night, a goddess of witches, is among tonight's rulers, especially if the moon is dark. Rituals and requests may be directed toward her, or revel with her in this night's energies. Hekate is among those who rule the frontier between the living and the dead. If you seek to contact deceased loved ones, ask her to facilitate the process. If you are haunted by ghosts, and not in a good way, tell your troubles to Hekate and ask her to banish these ghosts from your presence or at least make them behave. See [November 16](#) for more information about the Queen of the Crossroads.

MORDGUD

The goddess Mordgud is the servant of Hella, Queen of Hel, a Norse realm of death, not to be confused with Hell, the Christian afterlife. She reports directly to Hella. Mordgud is the Mistress of the Hel Gate. She guards the bridge that connects the realms of the living and the dead and that lies over the river separating these realms. Mordgud has control over whether souls may leave or enter. Her name has been translated as "furious battler." Mordgud is a shapeshifter who may take various forms, some more intimidating than others. She may appear as a skeleton, a partial skeleton, or in more welcoming forms. Many consider her a welcome psychopomp—a spirit who shepherds the dead to their appropriate next realm. Tonight is widely considered sacred to her, though this is based on modern traditions, not ancient ones, and specifically because of the sheeriness of the veil. If you seek Mordgud's favor, whether as a psychopomp

or to allow you to converse with those beyond the veil, tonight is the night. See [November 1](#) for information about Hella.

NICNEVIN

The sound of geese honking overhead signals the presence of Nicnevin, especially tonight. They are her sacred birds. Nicnevin the Bone Mother is a Scottish witch goddess and a Queen of the Fairies. Her name is usually translated from the Gaelic as “Daughter of Frenzy.” Nicnevin is among the spirits associated with the Wild Hunt. She rides through the skies accompanied by a retinue of fairies, witches, and geese. Usually she is invisible, but Samhain is Nicnevin’s feast and so she may allow herself to be seen, although her appearance varies. She may appear as a beautiful, sexy woman or an elderly crone. Her customary garb in either guise is a gray mantle. Tonight and tomorrow, Nicnevin grants wishes and responds to petitions. Honor her with a feast and celebratory toasting of her powers.

SANTA MUERTE

Some of her devotees claim that Santa Muerte celebrates her birthday today, while others strongly protest this notion, perhaps because as Saint Death, she has no “birth” day. Please see [November 2](#), the Day of the Dead, for more information about Queen Death.

November

Batten down the hatches for November, whose name, deriving from the Latin *novem* or “nine,” reflects that this was once the ninth month of the old Roman calendar, although it is now our eleventh and penultimate. Names for this month in other Northern Hemisphere languages frequently refer to sacrifice or slaughter—this was traditionally the month for butchering cows and pigs. Death is in the air in one way or another. In northern areas, deciduous trees are likely to be bare and leafless. Cold weather may be on its way, if not already here. An old proverb advises that in November, “let the thresher take his flail and the ships no more sail.”

The energies of November are focused on occult mysteries, especially those of life and death, birth, and resurgence. This is the beginning of the season when hordes of the dead are believed to return, at least temporarily, to old stomping grounds, whether to visit loved ones and favorite places or to actively haunt the living. Ideally, these visitations reflect love that survives the grave. Vampires are also reputedly out and about in November, possibly abetted by some otherwise respectable saints, or at least so suggests Central and Eastern European folklore.

When this season of the dead concludes is subject to debate: there is a wide consensus that it continues into the winter, perhaps only until January 6, a day of immense power, but some suggest that it continues through the beginning of February with its first promise of spring, or even until the spring equinox. The intense yang energy heralded by the beginning of Aries season is believed to drive away all but the most persistent or beloved of ghosts. Still others insist that nights remain haunted until dawn on Saint George’s Day in April.

The veil between the realms, at its most permeable on October 31, continues to be sheer. This veil does not rise and fall abruptly like a stage curtain. Instead its shimmering presence increases and dissipates gradually. Those who are sensitive to such things and don’t like it should take precautions. For others, there are some excellent nights in November for spirit work of all kinds, and the month in general is prime time for ancestor work. The following are some suggestions, in no particular order—ancestor work is intensely personal. Choose what resonates with you.

- Create altars for the dead (see the entry for [November 2](#) for tips).
- Clean, repair, or decorate graves.
- Spend time at graveside—no need to “do” anything. Just consider how you feel in their presence.
- Perform rituals to contact your dead. Séances, spirit boards, and rituals to stimulate dream visitations come to mind, but methods are only limited by your imagination.
- Research your DNA and genealogy to uncover the history of your dead and to help identify ancestors or, at least, ancestry. Haplogroups help trace deep ancestry.
- Find family photos and frame or display them.
- Perform appropriate good deeds or charitable acts in their name, especially if these ancestors behaved in ways you perceive as dishonorable, disgraceful, or worse. This may ease your own discomfort but may also, at least according to some belief systems, earn merit for your ancestors in the afterlife, which will eventually, once sufficiently accrued, assist their evolution into helpful ancestors rather than problematic ones.

Two festivals dedicated to the goddess Hekate occur in November, but some devotees consider the entire month dedicated to her. See [November 16](#) for details. Other witch goddesses celebrated this month include Lilith, Feronia, and Nicnevin.

Angel of November: Adnachiel or Advachiel

Astrological Signs of the Month: Scorpio and Sagittarius

Birthstones of the Month: citrine, topaz

Birds of the Month: goose, kestrel, rooster, screech owl, turkey

Flowers of the Month: chrysanthemum, hydrangea, marigold, peony

November's Holidays and Extra Power Days

All Saints Day, The Feast of All Hallows (November 1)

All Souls Day, the Day of the Dead (November 2)

Hallowtide: in the same way that, according to Church doctrine, the Holy Trinity consists of three beings who are really one, some perceive the

three days devoted to the dead as actually being one festival, known as Hallowtide or Hallowmas. In this context, Hallowtide encompasses October 31 and November 1 and 2. (However, be forewarned: the word Hallowmas may also refer to November 1 alone.)

Blackthorn Day, Old All Hallows Day, Martinmas, Shadowfest: November 11

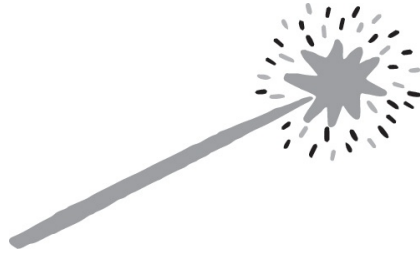
Saint Catherine's Eve, ideal for love magic and dream divinations: November 24

Saint Andrew's Eve: ideal for witchcraft, spellcasting, and divination: November 29

Moveable Feasts

For many, **Samhain** is synonymous with Halloween and thus celebrated on October 31. However, some choose to celebrate Samhain on other dates, which generally fall in November. These include:

- The first full moon after the inauguration of Scorpio season.
- The first dark moon after the inauguration of Scorpio season.
- November 11, when All Hallows Eve was celebrated on the old Julian calendar.
- Some celebrate for the entire month of November.
- Some celebrate from one dark moon until the next.
- Some calculate the holiday astrologically. Determine the date corresponding to the fifteenth degree of Scorpio, which is the midpoint of the sign and thus the peak of its essence. The date varies annually but is typically around November 6 or 7. To be sure, consult an ephemeris or an astrological calendar.
- Some calculate and celebrate the exact astrological point that is midway between the autumnal equinox and the winter solstice, which is typically at the fifteenth degree of Scorpio.
- Some celebrate 9 Days of Samhain or 13 Days of Samhain; termination dates depend on whether one begins counting on October 31 or November 1.
- The Time of the Dead, beginning the day after the November full moon and terminating at the next new moon.



November 1

“Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!”

See [January 1](#).

Legend has it that when the clock strikes twelve on the first midnight of November, the dead walk the Earth, returning to old haunts until sunrise. Those who died under violent circumstances may be witnessed reenacting their final moments of life, at least by those with the eyes to see. Some interpret “first midnight of November” as the beginning of November 2, the first midnight following the first full day in November.

Today is also widely perceived as being “outside of time.” Because of this liminality, it’s considered among the best—if not *the* best—days to travel willingly between worlds, realms, and dimensions.

All Saints Day

Today is the feast of All Saints, also known in English as All Hallows Day. “Hallow” is an archaic word for saint, similar in derivation to the still current *hallowed*. Another name for today is Hallowmas, derived from the Old English for “saint’s mass.” It is a day to honor *all* saints, those known and those not yet revealed. Any saint or combination of them may be venerated today. This is a Catholic feast but based on earlier Pagan traditions of venerating pantheons. The holiday has so permeated the broader culture that many non-Catholics also celebrate in their own personal ways. Construct altars or ritually cleanse them, burn candles, make offerings, or visit shrines.

ALL SAINTS OIL

Which saints are represented by All Saints Oil? If you'd like to improvise, technically *any* saint could be or at least those associated with specific botanicals, required to transmit the power of the saint into the oil. Choose any number of your favorite saints, select botanicals associated with them, grind these botanicals together, and then add them to oil to transmit their power. For example, roses for Mary, Mother of Jesus, or Mary Magdalene; chamomile for Saint Martha; and sunflowers for Saint Bartholomew.

However, the name "All Saints Oil" refers to a traditional Hoodoo formulation. In this context, "All Saints" is widely understood as a euphemistic reference to the Seven African Powers (see [below](#)) or even for generic benevolent spirits. All Saints Oil is believed to transmit their blessings of success and happiness. Traditionally made with seven botanical ingredients, if you would like to add an ingredient, please do, but then remove another so that the number remains constant.

1. Grind the following together with a mortar and pestle: cinnamon, gardenia, lavender, mugwort, patchouli, Tonka beans, and vetiver.
2. Transfer the ground botanicals to a jar or similar container, then cover them with sweet almond and jojoba oils.
3. If you would like to substitute essential oils for any of the dried botanicals, add them now.

All Souls Eve

Today is All Saints Day, but tonight is the eve of tomorrow's feast of All Souls. The following spell is intended to be cast tonight:

ALL SOULS GHOST SPELL

This spell is intended for use with a stang, a forked wooden staff that is an important magical tool in various shamanic and witchcraft traditions. If you do not have a stang, a forked stick of appropriate size can substitute. If you are a serious ghost hunter or necromancer, a stang made from wood associated with the dead, such as yew, hemlock, or oleander, increases the likelihood of success. But be extremely careful: you want to observe the dead, not join them prematurely. Each of those trees has poisonous components: do not handle unless extremely familiar with them and make sure to take precautions, such as wearing gloves and perhaps a covering over your chin.

1. Venture out to a crossroads, ideally a quiet one at dusk or later.
2. Place the stang before you in an upright position.
3. Rest your chin on the fork, so that you are effectively looking through the frame created by the stang.
4. Allegedly this enables you to see local ghosts, as they travel tonight.

Allantide and the Allantide Game

The Feast of Saint Allan, known as Allantide in Cornwall, commemorates Saint Allan (also spelled Alan or Arlan), a sixth-century Bishop of Quimper in Brittany. It's traditional to bestow gifts of large, shiny, highly polished red apples, known as Allan apples, today. These are believed to bring good luck, but also have ritual uses. For example, place one beneath your pillow tonight to stimulate romantic dreams.

Many scholars believe that the Allantide Game was once a ritual that has devolved into a party game. This fiery version of apple-bobbing requires a cross constructed from two pieces of wood, which is then suspended from the ceiling with a lit candle on each of the four arms of the cross. Allan apples are suspended beneath this cross. Participants attempt to capture apples (or bites of apple) in their mouths. Be careful: it's possible to catch hot wax instead. Those who are successful, however, are believed to receive good luck.

Days of the Dead

Although traditions vary by region and family customs, today, the day before *the* Day of the Dead, is widely celebrated as *Dia de los Angelitos* or the Day of the Little Angels, dedicated to honoring and remembering deceased children, either with an offering table at home or outside, or with a visit to the cemetery.

Samhain

Today is the first day of the Celtic dark half of the year, which some interpret as the first day of winter, although meteorologists disagree. See [October 31](#) for more information.

Spirits of the Day

HELLA

Hella presides over Hel, the Norse afterlife. The name was appropriated for the Christian Hell, but beyond the name, no relation exists between the two realms. Hella's Hel is not a place of punishment. While those who die in battle or at sea go to other realms, Hel is the afterlife destination for the vast majority of the dead. Hella welcomes them to her realm regardless of how they behaved while alive—sinners, the saintly, and everyone in between. Some places in Hel are more comfortable than others, and it doesn't hurt to be in Hella's good graces.

Today is *not* a traditional Norse holy day. However, many modern devotees celebrate today as Hella's birthday. Hella is simultaneously alive and dead. If you can imagine her sliced vertically in two, one side of her body resembles a vital, beautiful woman while the other half is necrotized flesh. She may be accompanied by a pack of dogs—the original hell hounds.

Hella appears to people in their dreams. She has a history of responding to pleas for good deaths. Hella may also be requested to perform the services of a psychopomp—an escort to the realm of death, whether in person or via one of her servants.

POMONA, THE APPLE QUEEN

When you bite into a sweet apple, thank the Romans. They were responsible for domesticating wild apples, transforming them from sour, bitter fruit into the prized, juicy fruits of today. Pomona is the nymph of apples, her name a derivation of the Latin *pomum* meaning apple. Today is the Pomonalia, her ancient feast. Vestiges of her veneration survive in the ubiquitous presence of apples in rituals at this time of year and in games like apple bobbing.

Not just another tasty, nutritious fruit, apples were long considered instruments of enchantment. Hence the long-standing belief that apples are the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden, even though they are not indigenous to the regions associated with Eden, nor does anything in the Bible indicate this. In Europe, apples were associated with witchcraft and, by extension, the acquisition of forbidden knowledge. Pomona is more than just an agricultural goddess—she is also a sorceress and a shapeshifter. She may be invoked for assistance with magic spells incorporating apples, as well as to help transform a bitter or sour life into a sweet one. The matron goddess of those with apple orchards or cider breweries, her symbol is a pruning knife. Pomona may be venerated on her own or in the company of Flora and Diana. Offer her candles, cider, apples, and foods

incorporating them, such as pie, turnovers, cake, or baked apples.

Pomona Fortune-Telling Game

Pomona provides an oracle. Modern apple bobbing games derive from her rites. You'll need an equal number of apples and fortunes. Write the fortunes. You can also combine this with bibliomancy, listing the page number of a book as a way of obtaining a fortune (see [September 6](#)). Either attach a fortune to each apple or mark the apples in some fashion as to indicate which fortune it's associated with. Small tokens are sometimes placed inside apples, similar to a king cake, but this is a choking hazard. There are traditionally two methods of bobbing for apples: either apples are placed within a large water-filled bowl, or they are tied to strings that are hung from rafters or the ceiling. Either way, participants clasp their hands behind their backs and attempt to catch the apples with their teeth.

Seven African Powers

In the belief that teamwork may be more reliable, seven different orishas are invoked together in a group known as the Seven African Powers. Together they can bestow all blessings. The traditional group consists of Papa Legba (a.k.a. Eshu Elegbara or Elegua), Ogun, Obatala, Yemaya, Oshun, Shango, and Orunmila. Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, orishas Oya and Ochossi have become extremely popular, while Orunmila, widely perceived as a remote orisha, is less so than before. As the magic number 7 must be retained, he is sometimes removed to make way for one of the two others. Although modern depictions may now portray them as African, for a long time, images of the saints to whom they are syncretized were used to represent them, especially for marketing magical products such as soaps and candles. Because of this, the Seven African Powers have become deeply associated with All Saints Day.

Today is a time to invoke all seven powers together to request their blessings and favor. Light one candle for each in the color associated with that orisha. Please see their individual entries in this book. Alternatively, large glass-enclosed jar candles dedicated to the Seven African Powers are readily available.

November 2

All Souls Day or the Day of the Dead

All Souls Day is exactly that: a day to honor and recall *all* dead souls. It's a day to visit loved ones' graves and tend to them. Now strongly identified with traditions of Mexico, Haiti, and South America, this holiday was once widely celebrated throughout Europe with all kinds of local rituals. For example, in Brittany, families brought cider and pancakes to cemeteries for picnicking and to share with the dead. As with All Hallows Eve, bonfires are lit and kept burning today and tonight to help light the way for all souls, wherever they are traveling. See [October 30](#) for a recipe for soul cakes and descriptions of *souling*, an All Souls tradition.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Dia de los Muertos literally means Day of the Dead in Spanish. The most famous Day of the Dead traditions are from Mexico, where the holiday blends indigenous traditions with those of Spain. While many different regional and family traditions exist, the dead are consistently welcomed with love, not fear. This is a celebratory time to welcome returning souls of loved ones, not a time to focus on grief and loss. Folk belief suggests that tears shed today make the roads traversed by the dead slippery, and so weeping is discouraged, although clearly this is an emotional time.

An *ofrenda* or offering table is prepared for returning loved ones. Preparations may have begun weeks before. Ofrendas may be simple or extremely elaborate, but nothing on an ofrenda is random. Everything is planned with attention paid to detail. The table is decorated with photos and images of the welcomed dead, as well as with things that are reminders of them. Objects associated with dead individuals are believed to welcome them but also magnetically draw them near. If an object, food, or beverage always makes you think of someone—if the sight of cinnamon candy never fails to remind you of Grandma—then that is what should be placed on the ofrenda. Reminder, the dead are already dead—no need to begrudge them cigarettes, alcohol, or foods that might not be healthy for them. Just give them what they love. In addition to foods associated with deceased loved ones, there may also be family holiday specialties, such as tamales or mole dishes. *Pan de Muerto* or Bread of the Dead is a sweet bread, often formed in the shape of bones.

Marigolds (*Tagetes spp.*) are the flower of the day. Known in Mexico as *cempazuchitl* or *cempasuchil*, a name derived from the Nahuatl language, they are also called *flor de muertos* or “flower of the dead.” Shredded blossoms are used to create paths intended to lead the dead to their *ofrendas*. The flowers, whether shredded or left whole, are also used to decorate altars and graves. Plant

them near graves to keep the dead happy.

Sugar skulls crafted from sugar and meringue powder and shaped with molds are given as gifts and symbolize the sweetness of life.

FET GÉDÉ

Today is *Fet Gédé* or Feast of the Gédés, a Haitian Vodou commemoration of the dead that also serves to honor the Gédés. The Gédés, guardians of the dead, are a class of Vodou spirit. Because most of them are souls of the dead, All Souls Day is their feast. Respects are paid to Papa Gédé, leader of this horde.

Sacred clowns, the Gédés are wild spirits who tend to travel in packs, rambunctious, vulgar, vital breakers of convention. As the old saying goes, you can't take it with you, and so the Gédés have lost everything but gained liberation in the process. They are free to say and do *anything*. Spirits of death *and* birth, they preside over both thresholds. Invoked for fertility, good deaths, and to prevent deaths, especially of terminally ill children, the Gédés are healers and prophets, truth-tellers, often to a painful degree, and revealers of secrets, including yours, so be careful what you ask.

Papa Gédé and Baron Samedi (see [below](#)) may or may not be two names for one being, depending on spiritual perspective. A widespread belief is that Papa Gédé is the soul of the first man buried in a cemetery or, alternatively, the soul of the first man buried in a particular cemetery, in which case there are many. Papa Gede stands at the crossroads of life and death to ensure safe passage into the afterlife for those recently departed.

Two different but interactive classes of spirits reside in the cemetery in Haitian Vodou: the Barons are spirits of death, while the Gédés are spirits of the dead.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BARON SAMEDI AND MADAME BRIGITTE

Baron Samedi is the leader of the Barons, Haitian spirits of death, and Master of the Cemetery. Together with his wife, Madame Brigitte, they preside over Day of

the Dead festivities today. Please see [February 1](#) for more information about Madame Brigitte. The Barons themselves are a huge, sprawling clan of spirits. Among the most famous of their number are Baron La Croix, Baron Cimitière, and Baron Kriminel. When people speak of *the* Baron, however, they almost invariably mean Baron Samedi. He is the spirit of the undying life force. Unlike Papa Gédé, there's no indication that Baron Samedi has ever had a human incarnation.

Baron Samedi manifests in the guise of an elegant funeral director, dressed entirely in black. He may wear impenetrably dark sunglasses with one lens missing, indicating his ability to see in two worlds simultaneously: the darkness of death and the light of the living. Details of his wardrobe may reveal his identity as a thirty-second-degree Freemason and Grand Master of the Celestial Masonic Lodge of Vodou Spirits.

The Baron and Brigitte are great healers, especially sympathetic to children who are terminally ill. As it's believed that no one can die until the Baron gives permission for a grave to be dug, he is often a spirit of last resort. Those who find him frightening may request Brigitte's intercession. The Baron and Brigitte are invoked for fertility—to bring new life into the world—especially if that's a challenge. They may be requested to unlock ancestral knowledge and to preside over communications with the dead. They can round up and remove unwanted ghosts or make them behave. They can also unleash them.

Baron Samedi accepts very humble offerings: dry toast, roasted peanuts, and strong black coffee. He likes Day of the Dead imagery and sex toys. The patron of funeral workers, gravediggers, those whose work brings them into contact with death, he is syncretized to Saint Expedite and Jesus Christ, but images of Darth Vader are also used to represent him.

SANTA MUERTE

Santa Muerte may be translated as Saint Death or Holy Death. Also known as Santissima Muerte (the Most Holy Death), she is not only a spirit of death. She is Death itself, the ultimate femme fatale. Today is her day, although devotees might suggest that every day is Death's day. Once venerated exclusively in Mexico, she is now beloved and feared all over the world with shrines in numerous nations. Few spirits are as actively vilified. The Vatican preaches against her in attempts to discourage veneration. Because some of her earliest devotees were members of the narcotics trade, she is identified as a “narco-saint,” and those who venerate her may be looked on with suspicion by law enforcement.

Death does not discriminate—everyone dies. You cannot bribe or bully Death. Santa Muerte is beloved precisely because Death embraces everyone. Regardless of who you are or what you have done or continue to do, Santa Muerte accepts you. Thus, she was initially embraced by the marginalized and those who feared they'd be rejected by other saints, but she is now venerated by a wide swath of people from every possible background and lifestyle. As Death, she is fearless and all-conquering. Nothing is beyond her abilities.

Her roots and identity are subject to debate. Some believe that Santa Muerte is literally personified death. Others consider her an Angel of Death. Still others consider her a goddess or a saint, albeit not a canonized one. She may be the shadow side of Guadalupe. She may be a Spanish importation—a variant of Europe's grim reapers. She may be a Mexican native, possibly the banished Aztec goddess Mictecacihuatl, queen of the Aztec realm of death, flying under the radar with a Spanish title. Alternatively, she may be another indigenous spirit, whose name and identity are now unknown. She may be a true mestiza spirit, a blending of cultures.

Instantly recognizable, Santa Muerte resembles a glamorous grim reaper. Typically envisioned as a skeleton, she's nicknamed the Bony Lady. Adorned in robes, she brandishes her emblems: a scythe and an hourglass. She also sometimes manifests fully fleshed but with skin white as bone. Santa Muerte appears in dreams and visions, offering advice, prophecies, and healing. Santa Muerte is an all-purpose spirit invoked in love, money, and protection spells. She provides anything devotees require or desire. A great healer, she may be requested for more time, although, inevitably, Death comes at the end. (But if you absolutely need a few more days or weeks to get your affairs in order, Santa Muerte would be among those to ask.) She presides over necromantic rituals and divination. If something scary has emerged from a Ouija board or you are terrorized by ghosts, Santa Muerte can fix it. She is also invoked to provide good deaths.

Legends that claim that if you seek help from Santa Muerte, someone you love will die as a result, are propaganda, told to scare people away from her. Because she is Death, however, she is inherently dangerous and mysterious. Considered a temperamental, volatile spirit, Santa Muerte prefers an altar to herself, but is willing to share space with a few others: Saints Anthony of Padua, Helena, and Martha, Archangel Michael, and Jesus Malverde.

Technically, Santa Muerte is everyone's saint, but she takes a special interest in those who come close to death in one way or another: funeral directors, embalmers, gravediggers, nurses, physicians, and those who occupy dangerous professions, from soldiers to sex workers to taxi drivers, as well as those who

live in dangerous neighborhoods or face death on a regular basis. She is also the guardian of magicians, witches, and fortune-tellers. Favored offerings for Santa Muerte include shiny red apples, white roses (but always fresh; never dead or withered flowers), sugar skulls, and alcoholic beverages such as rum, tequila, or whisky.

RITUALS TO INVOKE SANTA MUERTE'S PROTECTION

Cast a Circle of Candles

1. Obtain twelve candles: four black, four red, and four white.
2. Dress and charge them as you will.
3. Arrange these twelve candles in a circle around an image of Santa Muerte.
4. Burn them while invoking her aid.

Flowers for Santa Muerte

1. Select a vase for Santa Muerte. You will be leaving it at the cemetery, so choose a vase that you can part with.
2. Depending on your circumstances, steps 3 and 4 may be done at home, in the cemetery, or wherever it's most convenient.
3. Grab a handful of coins and place them within the vase.
4. Add water and one dozen fresh and beautiful white flowers to the vase—ideally white roses, but other flowers may be substituted, for example white carnations, chrysanthemums, or lilies. You may add a note if you like.
5. Leave this vase at the gates of a cemetery or, alternatively, at the first grave you see. Accompany with prayers and petitions, as desired.

November 3

The Venus Glass

Oomancy is the art of egg divination—fortune-telling using eggs as a device, as opposed to, for instance, reading tea leaves or coffee grounds. Numerous

methods exist, some using the whole egg, others only the whites. The folk name for this practice is the Venus Glass.

Oomancy may be practiced anytime. It's a simple household divination and was most likely practiced whenever there were egg whites left over or when an answer to an immediate question was required. This bit of magic was safe and easy during a time when magical practice was strictly forbidden, especially by communities like the Puritans of Salem Village.

The simplest method is to drop a fresh egg white into a glass of lukewarm or warm water. The egg white will form a shape, which may then be interpreted. Some prefer using hot water, which, depending on temperature, may curdle the egg. However, some find this easier to read. It's up to you. Use a plain drinking glass or reserve a special diviner's glass, or you may also use a bottle, jar, or bowl. So long as a glass vessel is colorless and transparent, it will be fine. The key to this method of divination is intuitive interpretation. Ask yourself what the shape looks like and what this could possibly mean. Among the signs you'll interpret are the colors of the egg white, which may not turn out to be purely white. Tinted glass potentially hinders this interpretation.

More complex variants involve letting the vessel sit overnight and interpreting the shapes in the morning. Pay attention to your dreams, too. Alternatively, place the vessel outside under the moonlight. Interpretations are made once it's been brought back inside, some hours later.

After the omen is read, throw the glass of eggy water away. Do not cook or consume.

Saint of the Day

MARTIN DE PORRES

Martin de Porres (November 9, 1579–November 3, 1639) was born in Lima, the illegitimate child of a freed slave of mixed indigenous and African descent and a Spanish knight, who initially abandoned his children but then took Martin and his sister to live with him in Guayaquil. When his father was appointed governor of Panama, the kids returned to Lima. Martin was apprenticed to a barber, which, back then, incorporated herbalism and surgery in addition to cutting hair.

Devoutly religious, Martin entered the Third Order of Dominicans at age fifteen. Because of his dark skin, he was at first accepted only as a lay brother and assigned menial tasks. That's how he received his nickname, Brother Broom. It took nine years, but eventually the monastery accepted him as a full brother. Martin spent hours in prayer nightly, mortified his flesh, fasted, and

never ate meat. He began demonstrating supernatural skills, such as bilocation—the ability to be in two places at once. A clairvoyant and a prophet, he accurately predicted the date and hour of his own death.

Martin developed a reputation as a miracle healer. People flocked to him, and he cared for *everyone*—rich and poor, slaves and nobles, Blacks, whites, Indians, and every possible permutation of person. He also healed animals, pets and strays, as well as livestock, which was radical for his era.

Hailed as a saint immediately after his death, the process for Martin's canonization began in 1660 but was not complete until 1962, although he had a large following as an unofficial saint in the interim. Martin de Porres is the official patron saint of African Americans, as well as those of blended ancestry, barbers, hairdressers, herbalists, clairvoyants, and those who fear mice. If you have any kind of issue with animals, seek Martin's help. During his lifetime, his ability to raise funds was considered miraculous. Now, as a saint, he is invoked to raise funds during emergencies. Light candles for him in his colors of purple and white. Martin is also invoked in love spells including this one intended to keep a roaming lover at home:

Stay Home!

A statue of Martin de Porres is required for this spell. A flat 2D image will not work.

1. Wrap a cord or rope around the statue's feet or ankles.
2. Request that Martin keep your roaming love at home with you. Explain your situation.
3. Accompany with candles and donations to charities that Martin would like.
4. If you change your mind and would like the spell's target to leave, unwrap the cord.

November 4

Four Thieves Vinegar

This legendary potion was believed to confer immunity on thieves who preyed upon a quarantined European city during a plague. Captured and condemned to

hang, they were offered their lives (and tickets out of town) if they revealed their secret formula. This recipe is the result. Its original use was as a health tonic—a spoonful or glass daily allegedly kept the doctor away. Four Thieves Vinegar is also used magically for banishing spells, but because of this, commercially packaged Four Thieves may include ingredients that are *not* healthy to drink. Be sure you know what you're buying, although it's a simple recipe to prepare. Although this elixir may be concocted at any time and as needed, my own mind turns to Four Thieves Vinegar as temperatures dip. Here are the instructions:

You will need one 25-fluid-ounce bottle of vinegar. I use red wine vinegar, but apple cider vinegar may be used, too. This is intended to be consumed, so choose vinegar of excellent quality with a taste you like or at least can stomach.

1. Pour the vinegar into a pot.
2. Peel garlic and add it to the pot. How much garlic? To your taste. You cannot add too much. But if you're not a fan, then add one clove for each member of your household.
3. Bring to a gentle boil and then reduce the heat to simmer.
4. This simmering pot of Four Thieves Vinegar may be used to spiritually cleanse your space. Using potholders, carry the pot through your home, allowing the steam to waft over thresholds, corners, and behind any doors typically left propped open.
5. Once this has cooled, pour it into a bottle.
6. Add four additional ingredients to the bottle, one per thief. You can use more than four ingredients if you like, but not less. Quantities are up to you. Flavor it to your taste. Traditional choices include lavender, thyme, parsley, sage, coriander, rosemary, chile peppers, tarragon, mint, or bay leaves. I use fresh ingredients, but dried herbs may be used, too. Do *not* use essential oils, which should not be consumed. Because this is an aggressive potion, I prefer ingredients with sharp points or those that resemble spears, such as cayenne peppers or rosemary stalks.
7. Cork or tightly cap the bottle, which should now rest in a cool, dark cupboard, away from direct light, for approximately a month. Turn it over occasionally or shake gently.
8. Despite the instructions in Step 7, depending on how badly it's needed, I sometimes start using it immediately, with positive results. In my experience, two tablespoons a day provide the desired results, but those

who enjoy the flavor may consume more. I've given bottles to friends who used it as salad dressing. I leave the garlic and additional ingredients in the bottle until it's all consumed. However, if you prefer a less homemade look, wait one month before straining out the other ingredients for maximum power.

9. If you are truly in a hurry, you can just stick the ingredients into a bottle of vinegar, allow it to steep, and then use. However, if the garlic is not simmered in the vinegar, it may turn greenish from the herbs. Many find this unsightly and unappetizing, and so it's worth taking the time to remove the vinegar from its bottle, simmer, and then cool the potion, before finally pouring it back into the bottle.

November 5

Today was once widely considered a day to exercise caution. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Red Hair Day

Natural red hair is characteristic of less than 2 percent of the world's population. Those with red hair have historically been teased, mocked, or discriminated against. It was also, at one time, considered among the telltale signs of witchcraft, especially as redheads are also more likely to be naturally left-handed, another telltale indication. Red-headed witches were once feared as being especially powerful, as well as temperamental. Flaming locks were believed linked with fiery natures. Today's holiday, celebrated since 2015 and also known as Love Your Red Hair Day, is intended to combat this and celebrate redheads, although many modern red-haired witches proudly celebrate once-dreaded stereotypes.

Natural red hair is disproportionately represented among certain ethnicities, especially Ashkenazi Jews and Celts, groups historically identified by outsiders to their cultures as being associated with magic. In parts of the British Isles, folk belief associates red hair with fairy or pixie ancestry. *Hurd-yed*, a deliberate mispronunciation of redhead, is a euphemism from the West Country, where redheads, especially red-bearded men, were traditionally looked upon with

distrust. Some Greek folklore identifies natural redheads as among those doomed to become vampires after death, although ancient Greek mythology identifies various goddesses as being red-haired, at least sometimes.

Today is an excellent time to celebrate the redheads in your life, as well as red-headed deities, who include Artemis, Athena, Helen of Troy, and Hawaiian goddess Pele.



November 6

Spirit of the Day

ABEI NO SEIMEI

Abei no Seimei, astrologer, author, exorcist, and diviner, is widely considered the finest practitioner of *Onmyodo*, a Japanese mystical tradition with roots in Taoism, astrology, divination, and other magical arts. A master of Onmyodo is known as an *onmyoji*, sometimes translated into English as “wizard” or “yin-yang master.” To be an onmyoji involves mastery of the forces of yin, yang, and the elements. Abei no Semei is sometimes described as the “Japanese Merlin,” although, unlike Merlin, historical documentation for him exists. Reputed to be the son of a fox spirit rescued from hunters by Abei no Seimei’s mortal father, his powers manifested in childhood. He could converse with birds and see spirits and lift curses. Abei no Seimei served six emperors. After his death, his home was transformed into a shrine: the Seimei Shrine or Seimei Jinja, founded in 1007, holds an annual festival honoring the onmyoji every September. Believed to have died on this day in 1005, pay tribute to him today and request his blessings.

November 7

Seven Eleven Redux

Although in the US, today's date is most likely to be abbreviated as 11/7, elsewhere the date comes before the month, so that today is 7/11. Please see [July 11](#) for more information about this very lucky day and for some suggested candle spells. However, today is excellent for any kind of positive spellcasting, especially for luck, money, and increase.



November 8

Fuigo Matsuri or the Feast of the Bellows

This Shinto holy day honors Hettsui no Kami, the kitchen-range goddess (literally, the *kami* of the stove), as well as the more famous Inari, spirit of rice, fertility, and agricultural abundance (see [below](#)). They may originally have had two distinct festivals, which are now conflated; both have roots in ancient ironworking rituals.

Hettsui literally means cooking stove, kitchen range, or hearth. Metaphysically speaking, the hearth or its modern substitutes are the heart of a home or residence. Although this is an ancient Japanese holiday, the date is now fixed as November 8 on the Western calendar. Hettsui no Kami is the guardian of families and their provider. Swordsmiths are honored today, as are the deities who protect, sponsor, and inspire them, as well as other beings associated with tools for controlling fire.

Traditional rituals today include arranging *shimenawa* (sacred ropes) around the stove, upon which sake, mandarin oranges, and a bellows are placed. Shinto prayers are said. The oranges are later distributed to children as amulets to ward off illness in the coming winter.

Mundus Patet

The portal to Hades was formally opened in Rome today and the dead permitted to roam. Please see [August 24](#) for more information. The goddess Mania and the Manes are placated today.

Spirit of the Day

INARI

This mysterious, complex spirit is among Japan's most beloved. Over one-third of all Shinto shrines are dedicated to Inari—and those are just the official ones. Countless other Inari shrines are found in homes and rice fields. Inari, an ancient shamanic spirit, is venerated by Shintos and Buddhists, as well as independent practitioners and the unaffiliated. The spirit of rice, prosperity, agricultural abundance, the harvest, better business, and fertility, as well as ironworking, there is virtually nothing that this kami cannot provide. (The kami are the indigenous spirits of Japan.)

Inari is a shapeshifter who manifests as female, male, both, or neither; as a beautiful woman riding a white fox or holding sheaves of rice; or as an elderly man with rice. Foxes are Inari's messengers and sacred animals, but also sometimes a form: Inari may manifest as a white fox or as a fox disguised as a Buddhist or Shinto priest. In addition to rice, Inari's emblems are a key and the sacred wish-giving jewel. These emblems are held within the mouths of the fox statues that mark Inari shrines. Those possessed by fox spirits may seek exorcisms there. Devotees or those who have been blessed by Inari must always be kind to foxes. No wearing fox fur or injuring a fox in any way. If you have done so in the past but seek Inari's favor now, you must apologize, repent, and seek expiation, or risk Inari's formidable wrath. Inari is also associated to a lesser degree with snakes and dragons.

Inari is invoked for protection from natural disasters, especially earthquakes and fire. Inari serves a broad constituency; potentially anyone may be a devotee, but traditionally Inari is the guardian of courtesans, geishas, sex workers, farmers, samurai, warriors, metalworkers, merchants, and retailers of all kinds. Inari is celebrated today but also at the autumn equinox and throughout the year. Inari's colors are red and white. Favorite offerings include *inarizushi* (fried tofu stuffed with rice), incense, traditional Inari fox statuettes (always given in pairs: female and male), rice, sake, pilgrimages, and conscious acts benefiting foxes. If you have received a major or life-saving blessing from Inari, it is traditional to donate red torii gates to a shrine.

November 9

Day of the Skulls

Skulls were once widely perceived as repositories of a once-living person's essence. Through them one could access wisdom, maintain a conduit to the dead, and receive accurate prophetic information. The keeping of skulls, whether of ancestors, loved ones, or enemies, was once a widespread custom around the world. Ancient Celtic warriors were feared as headhunters, while some scholars believe that the mysterious *teraphim*, stolen by the matriarch Rachel in the *Book of Genesis*, were ritually prepared ancestral skulls.

Skull-centric traditions survive in Bolivia, where today is *Día de los Ñatitas*, generally translated as Day of the Skulls, although *ñatita* literally means “pug-nosed one,” an affectionate diminutive. The festival occurs one week after the conclusion of *Día de los Muertos* and is part of November's preoccupation with the dead. Originally a pre-Christian Aymara festival, it now combines elements of Andean and Catholic customs. Skulls are spiritually cleansed and often elaborately decorated, then given offerings of alcohol, cigars, and coca leaves. They may be brought to churches to be blessed or become the central focus of other traditional or personal rituals. The flower associated with today's celebration is the hydrangea, and many skulls are decorated with them.

Where do the skulls come from? Some may be temporarily removed from graves, cleansed, honored, and returned but many people keep *ñatitas* in their homes, where they are revered and regularly requested for help. In this case, these are not anonymous or random skulls but those of relatives and loved ones. *Ñatitas* bring blessings, if cared for properly, and may offer prophecies and advice to those who can hear. According to traditional Aymara belief, each human being possesses seven souls. Six depart the body after death, on to varying destinations, but the seventh soul remains attached to the skull and can still communicate with and help loved ones, at least if proper rituals are maintained. Today's holiday is part of these rituals.

Spirit of the Day

TATA BOMBORI

Tata Bombori, translated as “Papa” or “Grandpa” Bombori and also called Saint Bombori, is an Aymara spirit, now syncretized to Saint James the Greater (or, in

Spanish, Santiago or San Diego) and so also called *El Tata Santiago* or *San Santiago Bombori*. He shares James' feast of July 25 but is also celebrated on the Day of the Skulls.

Among the most beloved saints of Bolivia, in addition to standard associations with James, Tata Bombori is the patron of shamans, fortune-tellers, herbalists, sorcerers, and traditional healers. He protects against the Evil Eye and dangers arising from the jealousy of your neighbors and coworkers. He breaks and prevents hexes and malefic spells. A miracle worker, he is a saint of impossible causes. Envisioned as a bearded man wearing a hat and elaborate robes, he is frequently portrayed with the white horse associated with Saint James.

November 10

Old All Hallow's Eve

Those who prefer retaining the Old Julian calendar for spiritual events may celebrate tonight as Halloween or Samhain. Anything scheduled for October 31 may be done tonight instead. Those who wish to repeat festivities may also celebrate tonight.

The Feast of Reason

Today marks the French revolutionary feast of the Goddess of Reason. First celebrated at the temporarily de-Christianized Cathedral of Notre Dame, itself built over what was Druid holy ground, it was an attempt to create a new philosophy to replace Catholicism specifically and religion in general. The Goddesses of Reason, Liberty, and Philosophy are honored today. They were not originally understood as "spirits" in the traditional sense, but as personifications of noble virtues. However, even then, the spiritually inclined comprehended these beings in whatever way was most natural. Today remains celebrated by secularists, agnostics, and atheists, but the feast has had added resonance during periods when reason and liberty seem especially elusive.

Celebrate through education, expanding your knowledge of history and philosophy. Educate others, as well as yourself. Donate books. Learn something new. Take political action on behalf of those whose liberty is curtailed, whether

by secular or religious forces. The more sybaritic, however, may celebrate with French champagne and cuisine, as well as a commitment to *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, the national motto of France and Haiti. See [October 5](#) for information about sister goddess, Lady Wisdom.

Martinmas Eve

In some regions and families, it's customary to eat the Martinmas goose tonight, not tomorrow. Remember to preserve the wishbone for ritual and divinatory use. Bonfires may be lit to herald Saint Martin's Eve, although they may also be lit tomorrow.

Spirit of the Night

NICNEVIN

Please see [October 31](#) for more information about Scotland's Bone Mother. Those who hold to the Julian calendar celebrate her today, while others celebrate both days, either individually or as one long feast dedicated to this witch goddess, beginning on October 31 and ending tonight.



November 11

The digital age has created a new set of esoteric tools and mysteries that range from messages transmitted through white noise to using television screens as spiritual portals. Today's date, which may be written 11/11, shares the themes of the 11:11 digital clock phenomenon. Digital clocks ushered in a modern form of personal oracle. What does it mean if you keep noticing the same set of numbers? This is a natural phenomenon, not a planned one. It doesn't work if

you set a timer or watch the clock until it hits the right number. It's a spontaneous awareness of a repeated sequence of numbers.

11:11 is the most famous, but any repeated number potentially holds a message: 10:10 or 4:44. Times like 7:11 or 1:23 also exert fascination. Some number sequences lend themselves to interpretation: if you are constantly catching sight of 9:11, consider who needs help. Is it a request or a warning? Likewise, sightings of 3:21 may be instructing you to "Go!", although you must interpret whether that means to leave or to begin.

11:11 is the topic of books, discussions, and internet posts. The consensus is that it may point to interaction with angels—perhaps a message that you are being protected—as well as communications with loved ones beyond the veil, very much in keeping with November's themes as well. 11:11 has also been interpreted as an activation code: repeated viewings may serve to stimulate our higher consciousness. 11:11 visually resembles pillars or pylons, such as those portrayed on several Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot cards, such as The High Priestess or The Moon. They may serve as an invitation to move forward into your higher consciousness or your subconscious—to explore bravely.

Blackthorn Day

Also known as *Lunantishee* Day, after the Irish name for the fierce blackthorn fairies, today is the day of *Prunus spinosa* or the blackthorn tree. Among the trees most closely associated with fairies, it's a favorite of witches, who have traditionally used the wood for staffs or blasting rods. Obtaining the wood and using these tools safely represent a mark of magical prowess, as the specific fairies associated with the blackthorn are among the most feared.

The blackthorn is off limits today. Do not cut a branch from the tree today or harvest in any way. This goes for May 11, too. (Before calendar reforms, these days would correspond to Beltane and Samhain, now celebrated on May 1 and November 1, two of the three annual fairy festivals.) At any other time, you *must* ask permission from the fairies—even before gathering fallen leaves or thorns. Blackthorn berries, called sloes, must be ritually harvested—the fairies must give permission, accompanied by offerings or payment made to them, the equivalent of purchase or rent. Fallen branches, twigs, leaves, needles, and sloes may be gathered, but it doesn't hurt to ask permission first, and you must always leave a gift for the fairies: libations of milk are favored, as is bread or shiny trinkets. In addition, offering the Lunantishees gifts of cake, butter, milk, or ale reputedly softens their nature, at least slightly and temporarily. Put these outside

on the doorstep or windowsill—you don't want to invite them in.

The blackthorn lends itself to protection magic, justice work, and cursing. Blackthorn needles are used to pierce poppets, and branches may be fashioned into wands especially useful for directing righteous anger.

Old All Hallow's Day

Today was the date celebrated as Halloween prior to Gregorian calendar reforms. For all sorts of reasons, some prefer this elder date. Others consider it ideal for a do-over, either because they love the holiday so much that one bout of celebrating isn't enough, or because festivities on October 31 weren't satisfying and so this is a welcome second chance. For many, today concludes the modern Season of the Dead.

Martinmas

Martinmas literally means “Martin’s mass,” reflecting that today is the feast of Saint Martin of Tours (see [below](#)). As with Michaelmas in September, it’s traditional to eat goose today, preserving the wishbone for future rituals, as well as to drink new young wine. Beaujolais Nouveau becomes available around Martinmas. Martin of Tours lived in France during its earliest exposure to Christianity and is sometimes given credit for his influence over Merovingian royalty and their conversion. Some historians believe that his feast replaced the Gaulish equivalent of Samhain—the beginning of the dark portion of the year and a kind of New Year. As with Lughnasadh, Martinmas was once a significantly longer festival, possibly lasting ten days, although where today’s feast fell within those ten days is subject to debate.

Folk tradition suggests that no work involving wheels be done today, lest misfortune arise. Spinning wheels, mill wheels, carts, and plows were left untouched today. Professional drivers might wish to take today off, as steering wheels and tires, had they existed, would have fallen under this prohibition.

Saints of the Day

MARTIN OF TOURS

Martin (c. 316–November 8, 397), among the most beloved saints, was born into

a Roman military family. His father was an officer in the Imperial Horse Guards, and Martin was named after the Roman soldier's patron deity—Mars. Paradoxically or ironically, following the suppression of traditional Roman religion, Saint Martin assumed many of the functions of Mars, as well as those of another Roman deity—Bacchus (Dionysus), possibly because pre-Christian Burgundy was famous for two things: horses and wine. In addition, Martin's feast today coincides with an old Roman feast of Bacchus. Like Bacchus—and Jesus—Martin could reputedly transform water into wine. Martin is the patron saint of soldiers; equestrians; horses, donkeys, and mules and those who care for or love them; mounted police; those involved with wine production in any way, starting with growing the grapes; beggars; drunks; alcoholics; tavern keepers; and geese. Although his associations with geese are more famous—if only because people eat them—Martin shares associations with another bird—the woodpecker—with Mars.

Martin is the saint of success. Hailed as a miracle worker while alive, Martin allegedly raised the dead, healed lepers, and exorcised demons. He actively and very aggressively converted Pagans, chopping down their sacred groves and destroying shrines and holy places. It can be hard to reconcile this hard, intolerant man with the generous, good-natured saint who participates in magic spells and is invoked for money and other material blessings. As with Anthony of Padua (see [June 13](#)), many consider this proof of syncretism—that beneath the mask of the saint lies the still vital Roman deity caring for his flock.

At one time, virtually every family in Germany and Central Europe dined on goose on this day. Eating goose on Martin's Day is believed to bring luck, prosperity, and success all year. In Italy, special anise-flavored cookies, *Biscotti di San Martino*, are eaten.

Bonfires are lit in honor of Martin's Day, possibly another vestige of pre-Christian rites. It's also traditional to feed Martin's horse today. Although now more frequently performed on a spiritual level by leaving grass, oats, or hay on Martin's altars, this was once done very practically: hay and oats were placed outside to be eaten by passing horses and donkeys so that they, too, could celebrate the feast of their patron saint. Martin also accepts humble offerings of bread, cheese, and wine. He is an all-purpose saint who may be invoked for virtually anything: from prosperity to protection from poverty, illness, and even the common cold.



SAN MARTIN CABALLERO

Saint Martin is also venerated in the guise of *San Martin Caballero*, Spanish for Martin the Chevalier or Martin the Horseman. This manifestation is more subversive, too—Martin Caballero is the patron and guardian of women who ply their trade in bars, as well as bartenders and tavern keepers. Anyone who habitually searches for sex in bars might wish to seek his protection.

Martin Caballero, Saint of Success, is the patron of small businesses, especially those that serve food or beverages. Merely maintaining his image on site is believed to transmit his blessings. The first dollar or other paper currency earned by a business is given in tribute to San Martin. Preserve it on his altar, frame it, place it beneath his statue or behind his image, but don't spend or lose it.

Legend says that an establishment will never run out of food or drink as long as Martin's horse is kept fed: leave some water as well as hay, grass, or something horses like to eat on Martin's altar. Martin's horses also reputedly ensure domestic happiness, again providing they're well fed. Keep an altar in the bedroom should this be what you seek.

November 12

A Spell for Illumination

This spell is intended to shed light on whatever is currently incomprehensible. Sometimes we find ourselves facing a brick wall of mystery that seems to resist all insight or explanation. These may be spiritual mysteries: a desire for encounter with the Godhead or knowledge of what happens after death. Alternatively, these may be intensely personal mysteries, from the emotional—"Why was I abandoned?"—to the practical: "Where is the money hidden?"

1. Prepare a quiet space where you will not be interrupted.
2. Prepare myrrh incense. Dried, powdered myrrh is commercially available and can be used, but freshly ground myrrh resin will be more potent. Use a mortar and pestle. Only a little is required. This may be enhanced with either copal, dried rosemary, or both. However, myrrh's delicate fragrance should predominate.
3. Burn the incense, then sit quietly in the prepared space, which should be

illuminated by a single light, preferably a white or light green candle, but a dim lamp may substitute.

4. Allow your mind to be clear and pay attention to spontaneous thoughts, even if they do not immediately seem relevant. If you fall asleep, try to recall details of dreams. Interruptions may also hold clues.

November 13

November 13 is famous as the date cited in the opening line of the TV series, *The Odd Couple*. It's the date Felix Unger's wife asked him to leave. And of course, sometimes, for one reason or another, you just need someone to leave. Banishing spells exist for when simple requests to go aren't enough. Many banishing spells are intended for those outside your home. The following spell, like the one spell associated with Saint Alexius on July 17, is for someone within:

Ginger and Wormwood Banishing Spell

1. The spell requires ginger root and wormwood. Fresh ginger from a supermarket or grocery store is fine. Wormwood root is best for this spell, but if only dried leaves are available, use those instead.
2. Slice the ginger into thick rings—there's no need to peel it. Place these in a bowl with the wormwood.
3. Pour boiling water over them to create an infusion, letting it steep for nineteen minutes, before straining out the botanical material. While it's steeping, focus on your desired goal and visualize its successful outcome.
4. Add this infusion to the rinse water used to clean the target of your spell's clothes. Prepare their laundry separately, as this infusion may work on anyone whose clothes are in the wash. Allegedly, they will soon decide to leave.

Saint and Spirits of the Day

THE CAPITOLINE TRIAD

The Capitoline Triad consisting of Juno, Jupiter, and Minerva were of crucial significance to Rome's public religion. Roman religion was then inseparable from its government. The three are venerated independently, but together they create a council of deities; their powers and blessings are combined. The concept of worshipping the three as a triad likely derives from the Etruscans, who predated the Romans in the region. Any temple in which they are venerated together is known as a *Capitolium*, but today's feast was once a major celebration at their shrine on Rome's Capitoline Hill, near the Campus Martius. The three are usually envisioned as seated on thrones, Jupiter between the two goddesses. Juno and Minerva retain their popularity in the modern era. Jupiter, perhaps seen as more remote, lacks the following of his compatriots Mercury, Apollo, and Mars. The three may be venerated together today, especially if you seek their guidance, blessings, or protection. Burn incense for all three and offer libations. Make their images the focal point of rituals and meditations. Offerings are made to Juno first. (Because Juno is *always* first, with the exception of Janus.) Then just sit and commune with them.

FERONIA

Today is the first of two days in November dedicated to Italian goddess Feronia, also spelled Ferronia. November 15 is the second. Although now sometimes classified as a goblin, in old Roman times, she was a goddess of fertility, vitality, prosperity, wildlife, and liberation, credited with liberating slaves and protecting the rights of the lowest rungs of society. Her temple in Rome's Field of Mars (*Campus Martius*) contained a sacred stone that conferred instant liberty if a slave sat on it. (What it took to obtain access to this stone is now unknown.) Freed slaves celebrated her on this day, and you may request that she rescue you from whatever form your own bondage takes.

Following the shuttering of temples and the banishing of Paganism, Feronia lingered in the shadows, eventually transforming into a witch spirit who haunts marketplaces. She manifests in the guise of a ragged, bedraggled homeless woman, the type of person from whom many avert their eyes. She may beg, rave, or accost people. Typically, she seeks small things—coins, cigarettes, food. Remember, Feronia only *appears* to be old and powerless. Those who treat her kindly receive her blessings, while those who mock her or are rude receive her curses, which only she may be able to remove. Burn candles for Feronia, offer her cigarettes, wine, and Italian cookies and other treats. Create an altar for her and decorate with images of wolves, her sacred creature. She may attract

prosperity to those with marketplace stalls who create altars for her.

SAINT OMOBONO

Also called Homobonus, his name literally translates as “good man.” Known as the “lucky money saint,” inexpensive statuettes of him are mass marketed and sold as novelties, leading many to think that he is “made up.” He is, in fact, well documented and is an actual canonized saint. Omobono Tucenghi, a wealthy, generous, and scrupulously honest merchant, died on this day in 1197, while attending church in Cremona, Italy. Canonized within two years, he is the patron of businesspeople, entrepreneurs, merchants, shoemakers, tailors, and the poor, whom he is believed to protect.

Omobono’s emblem is a moneybag. Light candles for him today and seek his blessings.

November 14

Has No Hanna Spell to Enhance Sales, Income, and Cash Flow

Has No Hanna is the name given to a versatile magical formula, deriving from New Orleans Voodoo traditions. A consistently positive formula, Has No Hanna is believed to enhance business, improve a gambler’s luck, and keep lovers true. Has No Hanna’s mysterious name appears to be a corruption of *hasnuhana*, the Bengali name for night-blooming jasmine. And although there are numerous variations on the formula, the one consistent ingredient is jasmine.

Has No Hanna may be used wet or dry. You can concoct it with dried plant materials or with essential oils. A list of potential ingredients includes:

Jasmine (the sole required ingredient); cinnamon; gardenia flowers; ginger; mint leaves; orange blossoms; zest from sweet citrus fruit, such as oranges or tangerines. If using dried ingredients, pulverize them using a mortar and pestle until you’ve created a fine powder, which may be used as incense. If using essential oils, add them carefully, drop by drop, to a vial filled with sweet almond or jojoba oils.

Has No Hanna should have a beautiful, evocative, pleasing aroma. It may be worn as a magical perfume, especially when seeking to influence others in your favor. Alternatively, place a drop in the palm of your dominant hand when attending business meetings. Other ways to use Has No Hanna to enhance

wealth and increase sales include:

- Waft the smoke of Has No Hanna incense over invoices, marketing plans, or other paper documents.
- Anoint these documents with a drop of Has No Hanna oil. (One drop is sufficient.)
- Soak cotton balls in Has No Hanna and place these discreetly in the corners of meeting rooms.
- A drop of Has No Hanna in your shoe or rubbed into the soles of your feet allegedly keeps poverty and financial disaster from your door.

November 15

Goose Day

In Austria and elsewhere, today is celebrated as Goose Day, a day to dine on that bird in order to ensure good luck. See [November 11](#) for another Goose Day.

Spirits of the Day

LILITH

November 15 is associated with this sacred being. Depending on who you're asking, Lilith is variously identified as a goddess, a demon, a wind spirit, the first vampire, the first witch, or some combination. She's also identified as the very first woman, preceding Eve.

As the terrifying star of Jewish folklore, Lilith featured in horror stories long before the invention of television. Although potentially a frightening, dangerous spirit, she is paradoxically also invoked in spells for fertility. Create a temporary altar for her by placing fresh or dried rue in a vase on a tray. Rue is harmful to pregnant women, so this spell must only be cast by someone who is *absolutely* sure she is not pregnant. Your rage and despair are the keys to making this spell work.

1. Place a mirror beside the rue. If you should happen to have shards of glass, carefully add these, as well.

2. Light a candle for her—any color, but red or black is best.
3. No abracadabras. No pretentious language. Speak to Lilith respectfully and frankly. Identify yourself to her, explain who you are, and why she should help you.
4. Lilith is a volatile, temperamental goddess. Ask for her protection for yourself and your future children as well. Protection from everything, including from her.
5. It is customary during spiritual transactions to offer a gift (or payment) *if* your favor is received. Traditional offerings for Lilith in this circumstance are naming the baby after her, obtaining a tattoo in her image, or creating or commissioning visual art that honors her and that will not be kept secret or hidden away.

FERONIA

Tonight is the second November feast of Italian witch goddess Feronia. See [November 13](#) for more information.

November 16

Hekate Night

Tonight is Hekate Night, devoted to the goddess Hekate, a powerful, versatile goddess of magic, witchcraft, the crossroads, midwifery, and the dark moon. As a goddess of the crossroads, she rules choices and protects her devotees as they journey through life. Hekate is a goddess of justice, who may be invoked by victims of any kind of crime, but especially crimes of a sexual nature.

Hekate survived the suppression of Pagan religion, albeit in the shadows. She became closely associated with witchcraft, as may be seen in the references to her in Shakespeare's Scottish play, *Macbeth*. Hekate may currently be the single most popular goddess among modern Neo-Pagans and goddess lovers. Information offered here is very traditional, but new rituals are evolving, as is a school of witchcraft known as Hekatean and dedicated to her.

The emblem most favored by Hekate's modern devotees is a key, indicating that Hekate holds the keys to all realms: her other emblems include a broom and a three-way crossroads.

Hekate's color is black. She is primarily associated with dogs, especially black ones, but also with other animals including bats, dragons, black cats, pigs, and horses. A nocturnal goddess, her rituals occur after dark, but the day may be spent in preparations. Devotees traditionally cook for her: she likes garlic and honey.

Things you can do tonight:

- Dedicate yourself to Hekate: formally inaugurate your devotion.
- Light a candle for Hekate.
- Request favors from her or thank her for petitions granted.
- Hekate may be requested to remove ghosts. If you are haunted by the spirits of the dead—whether this is a haunting of place or you are being tormented in your dreams—give Hekate the details and ask her to banish your ghosts.
- Hekate may be invoked for fertility, healthy pregnancies, and safe childbirth.
- If serious crimes have gone unpunished, identify the perpetrators to Hekate.
- Ask Hekate to bless your witchcraft, tools, and spells.

Arrange food offerings on a disposable plate or one that you will not be sad to lose, as the plate itself is part of the offering and cannot be retrieved. (If you serve her on an altar, reserve plates for her exclusive use.) Libations may be poured directly on the ground. Although she may be venerated at an indoor altar, her offerings are often placed outside, ideally at a crossroads. Should animals or people take the offering, don't worry! Once you've given it to Hekate, it's hers to distribute as she deems best. Dogs approaching your offering or even the sight or sound of a dog are considered very auspicious signs—an indication of acknowledgment from the goddess.

Once you have given Hekate your offering, it's customary to dine, dance, and otherwise celebrate. Hekate Suppers are dinners given in her honor. The entrée is typically fish, especially red mullet, a ritual food in Greece and Rome, favored by some deities but taboo for others. Other favored food items include eggs and croissants or other crescent-shaped foods.

If you've requested or received something from Hekate, traditional offerings including good deeds on behalf of canines and increased dedication to her. Examples: create a permanent altar to her in your home, obtain an altar image or a tattoo, sponsor meals for the homeless, especially during the month's dark

moon days.

November 17

Hungary Water

This magical formula intended to promote revitalization and youthfulness is also called Queen of Hungary Water, but really it should be named Master Herbalist of Hungary Water, as he's the one who concocted it. According to legend, by age seventy-two, Queen Isabel of Hungary was virtually crippled by gout and rheumatism. Her herbalist created this formula in order to relieve her pain. Administered via vigorous massage, its effects were so dramatic that Queen Isabel's beauty reemerged, as did her youthful nature. Not only was she pain-free; she was well enough to dance. Ever since, Hungary Water has been touted as a youth potion.

The key ingredient without which this formula is no longer Hungary Water is rosemary. The original fourteenth-century formula called for the equivalent of one and a half pounds of flowering rosemary tops added to one gallon of spirits or wine, left to soak for four days, and then distilled. If you have access to distilling equipment, experiment. Over the centuries, more accessible variations have emerged, such as this one:

1 ounce infused rosemary and vervain water (instructions below). Substitute hydrosols, if available and desired.

4 drops essential oil of rosemary

4 drops essential oil of lemon petitgrain

2 drops essential oil of Hungarian or German chamomile

2 drops essential oil of spearmint or peppermint

1 drop of neroli or petitgrain

8 ounces of vodka or Everclear

1 ounce of rosewater

1 ounce of orange blossom water

1. Create the infused water by placing equal quantities of dried rosemary and vervain in a bowl. Pour boiling water over them. Let this steep for fifteen minutes, then strain out the botanical material, saving the liquid. Measure out the quantity needed and set it aside to come to room temperature. Refrigerate any extra liquid for future use.
2. Add essential oils to the alcohol in a separate container.
3. Blend the infused water and the floral water together with the scented vodka.
4. Cover tightly and let it rest for a week in a cupboard away from direct light. Give it a good shake daily.

SAFETY TIP: Hungary Water is intended for external use only. Splash it on face and body or use it as a toner or via massage.

Saint of the Day

ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

Elizabeth is the English variation of the Hebrew name Elisheva. The Hungarian variant is Erzsebet and the Spanish is Isabel. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary is known as Szent Erzsebet in her native Hungary and Santa Isabel in Spain. Today's saint, although born to royalty, is not the same woman as the queen associated with Hungary Water.

Saint Elizabeth (July 7, 1207–November 17, 1231) was born a princess, the daughter of King Andras II of Hungary. Today is her feast. Betrothed to Duke Louis IV of Thuringia, she was sent to live at his court at age four to be raised by her future mother-in-law, although she would not marry until she was fourteen. The Franciscans arrived in Thuringia shortly after Elizabeth, and she quickly fell under their sway, being extremely influenced by their philosophy of voluntary poverty. Elizabeth sought to live a life of prayer and poverty. Food became an obsession for her—both feeding the poor *and* depriving herself.

Once, as she was about to venture out to distribute food to the poor, Duke Louis challenged her to reveal what was hidden in her apron. When she did, the bread hidden there was miraculously transformed into roses. It's Elizabeth's most famous legend.

Saint Elizabeth is considered exceptionally compassionate and may be invoked for virtually anything, but especially healing. The matron saint of brides, widows, exiles, the homeless, healers, and lace makers, she is the spiritual guardian of dying children. Burn candles for Elizabeth. Her traditional offering recreates her miracle: bread and roses.

November 18

World Occult Day

The literal meaning of *occult* is “hidden.” The occult is an umbrella term for all the mysteries of the universe. Occultists are those who explore these mysteries. On World Occult Day, delve into the mysteries. Expand your own knowledge and experiences as an occultist or, alternatively, support your own favorite occultists today or venues for occult knowledge, such as sellers and publishers of esoterica. In some households, every day is World Occult Day, but if not, today

is an excellent opportunity to explore what fascinates you. Begin a new book, for example, or, if you wish to learn to read Tarot or runes or comprehend the meaning of “Enochian,” today is an excellent opportunity. Stores and organizations devoted to the occult may have special events today.

November 19

The Synod of Whitby in 664, held at Whitby Abbey, determined that England would adopt Roman Catholic rites rather than retain those of Celtic Christianity. Today’s saint of the day was a prominent attendee. For centuries, that was what Whitby, a seaside town in Yorkshire, was most famous for, as well as for the ammonites and jet found there. And then, in 1897, Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* was published. Whitby is where Dracula’s captain-less ship runs aground and where future vampire Lucy is on holiday. Ever since, Whitby has been associated with vampires, the occult, and Goth culture.

Jet Spells

Jet is fossilized driftwood, often mistaken for a black stone. Found in several locations worldwide, the Romans crafted jewelry from it, Native Americans used it to decorate weapons, and the Victorians prized it for mourning jewelry. Jet also has magical uses, especially for protection, similar to black crystals. The following spell may be used indefinitely.

AMBER AND JET SWEET SLEEP SPELL

Like jet, amber is fossilized botanical matter. Natural magical partners, both are considered highly protective against spiritual forces, precisely those that cause sleepless nights. (Jet promotes protection here, while amber encourages sweet dreams, but if all you seek is protection, jet may be used alone.) To promote sound sleep and battle insomnia, cast a circle of alternating amber and jet pieces around your bed or the place where you sleep. If that much jet or amber is prohibitively expensive, consider that necklaces are circles, too. Wear a necklace of alternating jet and amber beads or ideally craft your own. Create knots between each bead, focusing on your goals and intentions with each knot. (See [February 8](#) for information on knot spells.)

Saint of the Day

HILDA OF WHITBY

Very little is known of Hilda's early life, other than she chose a religious vocation, first becoming a nun, then the abbess of several monasteries, and finally first abbess of Whitby Abbey, where she spent the rest of her life. A prominent and energetic woman, kings sought her advice. She was renowned for producing miracles during her lifetime, and Whitby's bells reputedly rang spontaneously, marking the moment of her death on November 17, 680. Today is her feast.

A legend is told of Hilda, crediting her with ridding Whitby of all its snakes by lopping off their heads with her magical whip. They transformed into the ammonites, locally called snakestones, found on Whitby's shores. Ammonites and jet are popular offerings given to Hilda, alongside candles, as well as pilgrimages to Whitby, where sightings of her ghost are reported on a regular basis.

Hilda is officially the matron saint of culture, education, learning, and poetry. Since the publication of *Dracula*, she has assumed other roles, too. She is the spiritual guardian of Whitby and guards against vampires of all kinds, from bloodsuckers to the psychic variety. Should vampires haunt your dreams, ask Hilda for protection.

November 20

Saint of the Day

ZUMBI

Zumbi (1655–November 20, 1695) is an unofficial saint, not a canonized one. In the seventeenth century, Quilombo dos Palmares was effectively an independent African state within slaveholding Brazil, consisting of illegal settlements where people of varying ancestry resided: escaped slaves as well as free people of African descent, whites, indigenous Brazilians, and every possible blend. By the 1690s, when Zumbi was its leader, the population is estimated to have been between 20,000 and 50,000, depending on who's counting.

Born in Palmares, Zumbi was captured in a raid when he was only an infant and raised by a priest who taught Zumbi to read and write in Portuguese and

Latin. By age fifteen, Zumbi ran away, returning to Palmares, where, as a literate and charismatic man, he rose to leadership. Zumbi led armed resistance to slavery and the Portuguese for about twenty years, until he was betrayed, captured, and killed. His severed head was packed in salt to preserve it and transported to Recife, where it was exhibited publicly. Both folk hero and folk saint, Zumbi is venerated by practitioners of Candomblé, Umbanda, Kardecian Spiritism, Spiritualism, and Catholicism, as well as the unaffiliated. Zumbi communicates via Spiritist mediums. Today, the anniversary of his death, is his feast, an ideal time to honor and invoke him.

November 21

Vampire Safety

The word “vampire” derives from *upir*, a Turkic word that spread through the Balkans and Central Europe, and which refers simultaneously to witches, werewolves, and vampires. In this context, werewolves are understood as lunar shamans, affiliated with wolves, rather than Hollywood shapeshifters. (Some Turkic tribes traced their ancestry to wolf mothers who magically had children with human men, and so this connection to wolves may not originally have been considered problematic.)

In some Central and Eastern European folklore, those who live as witches and werewolves are believed fated to become vampires after death. (This type of vampire may be seen in Mario Bava’s horror movie, *Mask of Satan*.) The folkloric vampire is a revenant, a destructive, harmful dead soul, who drains the aura, vitality, and life force of the living, rather than blood. Not sexy, seductive, or sparkly, this traditional vampire reeks of the grave and spreads disease in its wake. Bram Stoker based his novel on some old folklore, but the success of his novel and the films inspired by it forever transformed how vampires are understood.

These magical vampire repellants derive from folk wisdom regarding traditional folkloric vampires.

- Garlic bulbs and blossoms are old methods of repelling vampires. (Essential oil of garlic will repel everyone.) The more fragrant scent of lilacs and peppermint are believed equally effective.

- The scent of roses is insufficient to drive off vampires, but their thorns may keep them in the grave. Planting roses and other thorny plants on graves is believed to prevent residents from rising.
- Vampires, like many other types of spirits, are believed afflicted with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). This may be used against them: tent your bed with fishnets or mosquito netting. Allegedly, the vampire will feel compelled to count the countless tiny squares in the nets and will forget all about you.
- Alternatively, keep a handful of hempseeds or seed beads in your pocket. Toss them on the floor should you fear a vampire's pursuit, and it will be compelled to count them.

November 22

Saint of the Day

SAINT CECILIA

Among the earliest Christian saints, Cecilia is believed to have died in 177 in Rome. Cecilia is now intensely associated with music, but she herself was not a musician. Her singing during her final days (even while being tortured and killed) is the reason why she is the matron saint of musicians, composers, and singers, as well as those who craft and repair musical instruments. However, Cecilia's domain extends beyond music. She is invoked for healing, especially eye disorders. She is also a road-opener, requested to remove obstacles in your way and anything that obstructs your route to success. Also known as Saint Cecily, today is her feast and the best time to request her favors or establish a relationship with her.

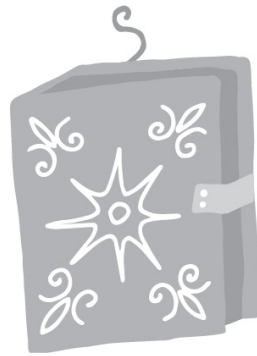
Legends sometimes describe her as blind, perhaps to rationalize why she's associated with visual disorders. Cecilia's feast coincides with that of a Bona Dea who was celebrated today before being banned with the rest of Rome's Pagan religion. Bona Dea spirits were venerated exclusively by women; almost no information about them survives. (See [May 1](#) for details, and also [December 1](#).) This particular Bona Dea protected against eye disorders, visual problems, and blindness. Cecilia appears to have absorbed her functions. Offer Cecilia candles, roses, and original compositions. Sponsor music students and musicians

in her honor.

November 23

Wolfenoot

Wolfenoot, a celebration of canines, kindness, and the humans who embrace both, is celebrated annually on this day. Pronounced “wolf-a-noot” to rhyme with suit, the holiday was founded by a seven-year-old New Zealand boy. A social media post by his mother about the holiday went viral, and Wolfenoot was embraced by celebrants around the world. Wolfenoot traditions include contributing generously to charities that benefit dogs, wolves, and other canines. During Wolfenoot, the Spirit of the Wolf hides small gifts around the house for family members, including pets. Those who have been kind to dogs receive better gifts than the rest. Wolfenoot dinners feature roast meat, as wolves eat meat, and cakes decorated to resemble a full moon; vegans and vegetarians can skip the meat. For more information: wolfenoot.com.



November 24

The Brumalia

Today marks the beginning of the Brumalia, a Roman festival honoring Ceres, Saturn, and sometimes Bacchus. Despite the date, its name references the winter solstice because that's when the festival once terminated. An ancient festival,

over the years, it shifted in length and focus. During the Byzantine era, the Brumalia was transformed into a festival of new wine lasting until the winter solstice. A barely disguised celebration of Bacchus, it was condemned by church councils but continued until at least the twelfth century. People celebrated with wine and small cakes, not unlike modern Pagan celebrations of cakes and ale.

Saint Catherine's Eve

The eve of Catherine's feast is considered among the best for love magic and dream divination. Catherine is the matron saint of lace makers. English lace makers, often young women, celebrated her feast as a holiday (see [November 25](#) for more information about Catherine). They held Saint Catherine's Eve parties that featured group rituals that doubled as party games and magic spells, for example, the Cathern Bowl, which is followed by jumping over a candlestick.

THE CATHERN BOWL

Bowl, in this context, is akin to a punch bowl, but indicates the contents, not just the vessel. The Cathern Bowl names a festive beverage that is also a magical prelude to jumping the candlestick. What follows is a traditional method, which assumes the presence of a fiery hearth, but adapt as needed for modern times.

1. Tie strings to apples so that they may be suspended from beams near a hearth fire or other heat source. The goal is for the apples to slowly cook as they dangle.
2. Place a cauldron, giant punch bowl, or other large fireproof bowl beneath the apples.
3. Fill this cauldron with apple cider, hard or not—your choice. Add cinnamon and sugar to taste.
4. As the apples roast, the pulp should fall into the bowl.
5. Once all the pulp has fallen, stir the mixture, and then strain it.
6. Drink and enjoy the strained beverage. The pulp may be used as you will or placed outside as an offering for trees. (And if you like it with the pulp, drink it that way.)

Jumping the Candlestick

*“Jack be nimble, Jack be quick!
Jack jumped over the candlestick”*

This Mother Goose rhyme may sound like nonsense, but it's based on a magical ritual, related to similar rituals of jumping bonfires or driving cattle between them. Fire is believed to purify the aura and remove residual bad luck. Jump the candlestick for good luck, but always be extremely conscious of fire safety.

1. Place a candle in a candlestick on the floor. Modern candles are often encased in glass, whether purchased from a botanica or Yankee Candle, and so the inclination may be to use one. Don't. This ritual requires a lit candle in a candlestick. Don't make it too high to jump over. A small candle is enough.
2. One by one, each person jumps over the candlestick.
3. If the flame is extinguished by your jump,^{*} this is an inauspicious sign indicating that the bad luck you carry is too much for this little ritual. Plan other cleansing and protection spells.
4. Make sure the candle is burning before each jump.

SAINT CATHERINE'S DREAM DIVINATION

Catherine of Alexandria was among the saintly voices heard by Joan of Arc, testament to Catherine's willingness to communicate. The two saints are sometimes venerated together. This English ritual, while dedicated to Catherine, is based on salt cake divination. As with other Catherine's Eve rituals, this was originally intended to be done in a group, doubling as a sleepover party game and an oracle. Two things are required: salt and silence.

The entire ritual *must* be completed in complete silence from the moment it begins until your dream is recorded. That's not easy. Beyond the inclination to talk, the salt may make you gag and, especially if there's a group, it may be hard not to laugh. Breaking the silence terminates your participation in the ritual, but it may be started again from the beginning.

Traditionally, this was intended as a romantic divination. Saint Catherine is supposed to reveal your future love or spouse in your dreams. Back then, that was crucial, as a husband or the lack of one determined a woman's future fate. However, Catherine may be requested to reveal anything you wish to know. Formulate your query—what it is that you want revealed—before you begin and hold fast to the thought.

1. Make a pancake with so much salt that it's *almost* inedible.
2. Eat it anyway, washed down with beverages, as needed.
3. Focus on your query during steps 1 and 2.
4. Go to sleep and, when you awake, record your dream or whatever details are recalled.

November 25

It's traditional to wear fancy dress on November 25 in honor of Catherine of Alexandria, today's saint.

Lace Reading

Modern lace makers and others can practice the mystical art of lace reading. When Brunonia Barry's novel, *The Lace Reader*, was first published in 2008, many readers assumed the author was describing an ancient practice. In fact, Barry had invented it for her best-selling novel. However, it *works* as divination, and has evolved into a vital practice. In the novel, generations of women from a Salem, Massachusetts family read the future by examining lace, essentially scrying, as with a crystal ball. If you've never done it, today is a good day to try or, at least, to search for a suitable, scry-able piece of lace.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

ATHENA

Among the most powerful and beloved of all goddesses, Athena is the Greek Olympian spirit of crafts including metalworking, spinning, weaving, and needlework, as well as of strategy, wisdom, and war. Renowned as the thinking-person's goddess and the subject of numerous myths, she is described as being born fully formed from her father Zeus' head. She is her father's favorite child, the only other deity allowed to touch his lightning bolts and to know where he keeps them hidden.

Athena's emblem and messenger is the owl, in whose guise she sometimes appears. She also manifests as a beautiful woman with gray eyes or as an owl-

faced woman. As befitting a night owl, Athena is ritually served after dark. Her numbers are 3 and 7, and her color is red. She is invoked for everything from personal fertility to enhanced creative skill to victory in battle. Offer her incense, candles, images of owls, snakes, and spiders, as well as your own creative endeavors. Today is not an ancient or official feast of Athena. The date is chosen to coincide with the feast of Catherine of Alexandria, as many scholars have theorized that the saint is actually Athena in disguise.

Athena Love Bag

This charm bag is for women seeking a relationship with women. Carry it to attract love and the right kind of attention. The quest to obtain items for the bag is part of the spell. Look for items associated with Athena and add these to a drawstring bag: for example, coral beads, naturally shed snakeskin, charms in the form of owls or snakes, leaves or twigs from olive trees, Athenian coins or small emblems of Athens, Athena, or snake-haired Medusa, her alter ego. Anoint the bag with a drop of your own menstrual blood or vaginal juices. Attach a small image of Gorgon Medusa to the outside of the bag, using it to keep the bag closed, if possible. Carry the bag while it's in progress, to initiate its effects. Tonight is an excellent opportunity to inaugurate the process. Alternatively, consecrate, activate, or reactivate the bag by placing it on an altar dedicated to Athena and letting it rest there overnight.

CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

Catherine is a powerful and all-purpose saint, performing virtually every kind of miracle from healing to romance. She is the matron saint of lace and rope makers; female students and sex workers; unmarried women, especially those who've never married; and wet nurses. Any occupation having to do with a wheel, from potter's wheel to roulette and spinning wheels, falls under her domain. Catherine is the special guardian of young girls and spinsters. In France, women of twenty-five who were not yet wed were once called Catherinettes. She is also the guardian of librarians, academics, and scholars. Virtually anything associated with Greek goddess Athena is also associated with Catherine, including battle strategy.

Catherine's sacred bird and emblem is a white dove, especially those with red eyes or legs. Offer Catherine white candles, as well as round cakes decorated to resemble a wheel. The fruits of your own labor will likely be appreciated as well, whether needlework or baked goods.

Cattern Cakes

Traditionally baked today, originally by lace makers, they are named for Queen Catherine of Aragon, who, while imprisoned in Amptill by her husband, Henry VIII, learned of the financial plight of local lace makers. In response, she burned all her lace so that new lace would have to be ordered from them. The recipe originated in the Tudor era and has varied little since then. These are not really “cakes” in the American sense; rather, they are biscuits or cookies—they’re round(ish) like a Catherine Wheel.

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups self-rising flour

¼ cup ground almonds*

¾ cup baker’s or caster sugar

¼ cup currants

2 teaspoons caraway seeds

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 egg, beaten

½ cup melted butter

Extra caraway seeds, cinnamon, and sugar to taste for sprinkling

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Mix all dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
3. Add the beaten egg and the melted butter, blending well until you have a soft dough.
4. Roll the dough out into a rectangular shape on a floured board.
5. If you like, sprinkle the extra sugar and spices evenly over the dough.
6. Gently roll the dough up, beginning at one of the short sides, as if it were a Swiss roll, then slice it into rounds approximately one inch thick.
7. Place the slices atop a greased or parchment-lined baking pan, leaving at least an inch of room between them, as they will spread.
8. Bake for approximately ten minutes or until they are golden brown. Keep an eye on them to make sure they do not burn.
9. Remove from the oven and allow them to rest. The cakes may be very soft when first removed from the oven, but should firm up once they cool.

OBA

This Yoruba orisha is syncretized to Catherine of Alexandria, and so she shares her feast day. The orisha of Nigeria’s Oba River, she is now overshadowed by fellow river orishas, Oshun and Oya, her bitter rivals. Do not venerate her alongside either of her now more famous compatriots. Oba is the first wife of the dynamic orisha Shango. (See [December 4](#).)

Oba is a powerful orisha, willing to do whatever it takes for love. In African Diaspora traditions, especially Brazil's Candomblé, she is invoked for help with the most desperate romantic situations: love, by any means necessary. Beautiful Oba protects and provides for her devotees. Her constituency is complex. She is simultaneously the guardian of faithful wives, prostitutes, and sex workers as well as those saddled with cheating or abusive spouses.

Images of Catherine or Saint Rita, to whom she is also syncretized, are used to represent Oba, but they do not necessarily capture her essence as a sexy love goddess. Music boxes or jewelry boxes may also be used to represent her. Her number is 8. Offer Oba candles and flowers in her colors of red and white or pink and white.

November 26

Today is National Cake Day, and so the obvious thing to do today is to enjoy some cake, but remember that cake is also a powerful ritual food, with wedding cakes a prominent example. Ritual cakes also survive in the modern King Cake. (Please see [January 6.](#)) Here are a couple ways to incorporate baked goods into spellwork.

Witch Cake

Witches cast spells through delicious food, or so it's historically believed. A less delicious cake is believed capable of identifying secret witches. The witch cake, a bit of English folk magic, is among the sparks that ignited the witch panic in Salem Village. Please see [February 25](#) for details.

Apollo's Oracle

This particular oracle is a form of aleuromancy or divination via flour (in Greek: *aleuron*). Once offered in Apollo's shrines, it's easily reproduced at home. An ancient temple ritual devolved into a bit of folk magic; it's an inexpensive and easy ritual, especially for those who bake daily and who lack or wish to avoid occult forms of divination like cards. It may be understood as an ancient predecessor of the modern fortune cookie.

1. Write fortunes on slips of paper. If seeking specific answers or advice, write each possible outcome on its own slip of paper. Alternatively, slip something different into each dough ball to represent different possible outcomes: for example, a walnut in one, a piece of dried fruit in another.
2. Prepare your dough. As with fortune cookies, eating the cookie is not necessary to obtain your fortune. Make your cookie as delicious as you'd like, or not. The simplest version involves a basic dough of flour and water, rolled into a round ball, but embellish the recipe as you'd like, adding sugar, cocoa powder, flavorings, or whatever you deem best.
3. Roll the dough into small balls of identical shape and size. Insert one fortune into each ball, place them on a baking sheet, and bake at 350°F. Baking time depends on the ingredients you've used and whether you intend to eat the cookies. Some consider them to be exclusively oracles, while others expect them to be tasty.
4. Remove them once they appear to be baked, allow them to cool, and then randomly pick one to receive your oracle.

November 27

Spirit of the Day

ANTINOUS

When Antinous, Roman Emperor Hadrian's lover and traveling companion, fell into the Nile River and drowned in 130 CE, Hadrian was so devastated that he had the beautiful young man deified, establishing festivals and feast days in his honor. Hadrian built a city at the site of his death on the east bank of the Nile, called Antinoopolis, with the added goal of building a Roman city in Egypt to rival Greek Alexandria. A shrine and oracle of Egyptian deity Bes already stood near Antinoopolis, and he is sometimes venerated alongside Antinous. In addition, Egyptian priests had mummified Antinous, leading to associations with Osiris, Egyptian Lord of Death. As Osiris-Antinous, he was venerated as an avatar of the Egyptian deity. However, Hadrian envisioned Antinous as an all-purpose deity, not one merely associated with death, and so he was also portrayed in the guises of Dionysus and Hermes. Antinous blends their energies and expresses elements of each.

Antinous' modern identity is as "the gay god," with the LGBTQ community as his primary constituency. Antinous is associated with pink lotus flowers. Maintain his image on an altar alongside those of Hadrian and the deities with whom he's associated. He is invoked for healing and as a promoter of life eternal or victory over death. Offer candles and incense.

November 28

November 28 was once widely perceived as an unlucky or inauspicious day. Please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Protection Spell

This is one example of a protection spell, but any other may be used today.

1. Write out the 91st Psalm by hand on a brown piece of paper.
2. Once you're done, read it aloud.
3. Burn the paper in the flame of a candle. The paper must be burned completely so that no letters are legible (be careful not to burn yourself). Holding the paper with tweezers is recommended. Alternatively, drop the paper into a fire contained within an iron cauldron.
4. Collect the ashes once they've cooled.
5. Carry them in a small charm bag until you are able to release them to the winds at a crossroads.



November 29

Saint Andrew's Eve

Tomorrow is the feast of Saint Andrew, and so tonight is his eve. Despite associations with a saint, Saint Andrew's Eve is considered among the year's most magically powerful nights and a time when witches and assorted spiritual entities are in full sway. Andrew is their saint, too. Because of his protection, vampires, witches, and ghosts may be particularly bold tonight. Those who fear them traditionally lock themselves inside tonight, surrounded by protection magic. Hungarian folk tradition suggests rubbing a cut clove of garlic over keyholes, windowsills, thresholds, and other potential portals to keep vampires and other unwanted spirits from entering. On the other hand, self-identified witches, vampires, and werewolves should prepare to have fun tonight. It's an ideal time to cast any kind of magic spell.

In the Northern Hemisphere, darkness falls early in late November, lengthening tonight's magical hours. The midnight hour dividing the 29th from the 30th is considered especially potent, with midnight itself as the peak moment. Although some believe that vampires are free to roam only tonight, others believe that tonight ushers in the Season of the Vampire, which continues until Saint George's Eve on April 22.

SAINT ANDREW GOOD LUCK AND PROSPERITY RITUAL

This Bulgarian ritual begins tonight and concludes tomorrow. Saint Andrew's Day is folklorically understood as the start of the magical winter season, but within that start is a seed of spring. This ritual is an attempt to align participants with that vibration of increase and plenty.

1. Place a variety of grains and pulses in a new pot and cover them with water. Use whatever is available: barley, beans, lentils, millet, oats, rice, wheat, and so forth. Ideally, there is an odd number of varieties.
2. Once the grains are swollen or soft, boil them. Cooking time depends on the varieties of grain. This may be done "low and slow"—the goal is for the end result to be edible and tasty.
3. Consume on November 30 so that your luck and finances will grow and prosper.

Who consumes this dish depends on local and family traditions: some keep it entirely within the family or household; others share with friends and neighbors; while still others offer it to poultry and livestock to magically assist well-being and fertility.

SAINT ANDREW TRUE LOVE DREAM RITUAL

Saint Andrew's Eve is also a night for lovers, the equivalent of Valentine's Day in some regions.

Should you desire to know the identity of your true love or spouse, undress completely and call upon Saint Andrew. Then keep silent until the morning. Sleep in the nude, and the identity should be revealed in your dreams.

CEROMANCY

Saint Andrew's Eve is traditionally a night for ceromancy, which is the art of interpreting the shapes of melted wax in water. This may be done in the guise of a party game with the goal of determining the identity of future spouses; however, ceromancy is an old tried and true method of divination and may be used by anyone to reveal any kind of information.

What follows is the basic method, although numerous embellishments exist depending on regional and private customs. For example, the bowl of water may be placed over someone's head or on a special ritual cloth. You will need a large bowl containing some very cold, chilled water and a block of wax cut into smaller pieces. Because this ritual is associated with Andrew, it's recommended that his blessings be sought prior to starting. Lighting a candle for the saint might ensure better results.

1. Gently melt wax in a double boiler.
2. When soft, carefully drop some of the wax into the bowl of water.
3. When the hot wax meets the cold water, it will form into shapes and harden. Be patient. Don't be too quick to remove the wax from the bowl. You can, however, start interpreting the shapes it forms. A skilled diviner can read the wax's transformation the way a card-reader reads a series of cards. Everything is potentially an omen: if the wax hisses or steam results, interpret these, too.
4. Once the wax has hardened in the water and will retain its shape, remove it. What does its shape look like? If the shape pleases you or forms an auspicious symbol (a heart or a lucky money sign, for example), retain it as

an amulet. Otherwise, you can melt it down again for future use. (And if the shape disturbs or frightens you, take this as a sign for further magical protection action.)



November 30

Saints and Spirits of the Day

ANDREW

Known as “the first called,” Andrew, a Galilean fisherman, was the first of twelve Apostles to join Jesus. In the tenth century, a legend arose that Andrew was killed by crucifixion on an X-shaped cross. Now known as a Saint Andrew’s cross, it’s featured on the flag of Scotland, among the nations to claim Andrew as its patron saint. Today is a day of celebrating Scotland and all things Scottish.

Andrew is invoked for healing and to strengthen and protect premature babies and children who fail to thrive. He’s also requested to heal ailments of the throat and neck including goiters, sore throats, swollen glands, and throat cancer. Officially, Andrew is the patron saint of those who fish or who labor in the fishing industry in any capacity, as well as those seeking to conceive. (Fish symbolize fertility.) *Unofficially*, Andrew is the patron of lovers and those who wish to marry, as well as witches, sorcerers, werewolves, vampires, and restless ghosts.

Because of Andrew’s connections with ghosts, vampires, and witches, he may be called upon to protect against them or control them; however, subversive Central and Eastern European folk traditions suggest that Andrew favors the children of the night. His protection allows and encourages them to roam free.

In Bulgarian and some other Slavic folk traditions, today marks the true beginning of the winter season. Believed able to control winds, Andrew is sometimes blamed for raising storms. To prevent this and to seek his favor, those whose lives and livelihoods depend on peaceful weather, such as mariners, burn candles dedicated to the saint today.

Offer Andrew things that represent him, including fish-shaped amulets and

X-shaped candles. He drinks Scotch, arak, and Galilean wine. Decorate his altars with fishing nets.

Saint Andrew Love Oracle

Hungarian folk custom suggests that if you fast all day on Saint Andrew's Day, consuming no more than three drops of water and three crumbs of bread for a twenty-four-hour period, you'll have prophetic dreams of your true love. The fast should last from the stroke of midnight, signaling the beginning of November 30, until the following midnight signaling the next day.

FAIRIES

Irish folklore suggests that fairies (*Sidhe*) emerge from their mounds tonight to dance on hilltops. They will then spend the winter in their mounds, emerging in the spring. Tonight, the dead rise from their graves in order to revel with the fairies. Unless you have specific business with them, it's considered wise to avoid them tonight and perhaps to refrain from dancing.



December

Although December is now the twelfth and final month, it was once the tenth month of the old Roman calendar. Its name derives from the Latin *decem*, meaning “ten.” The month is dominated by events near its end: the solstice, Christmas, and New Year’s Eve. As the threshold between the present year and the next, December is packed with extra magic power days. In the Northern Hemisphere, the solstice in December marks the longest night and shortest day of the year (it’s the opposite Down Under). Afterward, days begin to lengthen, but it’s a subtle process, and while we may be aware of it intellectually, it may not be visible for a while. It is quite literally a dark time of year. Many of the month’s magical customs both celebrate light and indicate a craving for it.

The end of this month marks the end of the year. Starting at the beginning of the month, there is a countdown to festivities, gifts, reunions, obligations, and resolutions, but whether this inspires happiness or dread depends on the individual. December can be stressful, joyful, or both.

All the energy in the air boosts spellcasting and your own magic power. It’s a time of swirling spirits. Fairies tend to hibernate, but the Wild Hunt is active, as are many ghosts, exemplified by Charles Dickens’ Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Future, who have taken on a life of their own. The *Kallikantzari*, Greek goat spirits, run wild during the Twelve Nights of Christmas, while in Iceland, trolls, the Yule Cat, and the Yule Lads find December the best time for mischief, specifically because of this month’s extended darkness. Folk tradition suggests that the sun causes adverse reactions among trolls—they may turn to stone—and so this time of year affords them the freedom to travel to human habitations and linger.

Another December spirit is Gryla, now widely known as the “Christmas Witch.” Her name translates loosely as “growler.” She dwells in northern Iceland’s *Dimmuborgir* lava fields, presiding over a sprawling household including her children, her ex-husbands, other trolls, and her pet, the Yule Cat. (See [December 25](#).) The first documented evidence of Gryla is from the thirteenth century, but scholars suspect that she is significantly older. Gryla is not associated with any one date exclusively. She is at the peak of her power

throughout December and has become incorporated into Icelandic and international Christmas festivities. Her 2018 appearance on the Netflix series *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* brought renewed attention and popularity to this ancient *trollkvinna* (female troll, but the word is also synonymous with “witch”).

Not all of December’s spirits are associated with Christmas. Two queens of African Diaspora religions, Yemaya and Ezili Freda Dahomey, are considered at the peak of their power this month and, in addition to feast days, may be venerated all month long.

Angel of December: Anael

Astrological Signs of the Month: Sagittarius and Capricorn

Bird of the Month: raven

Birthstones of the Month: tanzanite, turquoise, zircon (especially but not exclusively blue zircon)

Flowers of the Month: holly, ivy, narcissus, poinsettia

Animal of the Month: badger

December’s Holidays and Extra Power Days

Feast of Saint Barbara and associated spirits: December 4

Krampus Night: December 5

Feast of Saint Nicholas: December 6

Season of the Twins: This month-long period begins on December 6 with the Feast of Saint Nick and ends January 6 with Epiphany. The Vodou lwa, the Marassa, are in ascendancy. See [December 28](#), their primary feast day.

Saint Lucy’s Eve: December 12

Old Solstice Day, A Celebration of Vision and Light: December 13

Saturnalia: begins on December 17 and concludes on December 23

Saint Thomas Eve: December 20

Festivus: December 23

Christmas Eve: December 24

Christmas: December 25

New Year's Eve: December 31

Moveable Feasts

Solstice: the second solstice of the year is celebrated in December, the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and the summer solstice in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mothers Night is celebrated at different times by different people. It generally corresponds with the solstice, but some celebrate at the new moon nearest the solstice. According to the monk historian, the Venerable Bede, Mothers Night was the most important Pagan festival of eighth-century Britain and corresponded in time with Christmas.

Yule: this Wiccan sabbat coincides with the winter solstice. It's sometimes also called Midwinter, as it is on the opposite side of the calendar year from Midsummer.

December 1

"Rabbit, Rabbit, Rabbit!"

See [January 1](#).

Advent

Advent begins today, the countdown to Christmas. Deriving from the Latin *adventus* or "coming toward," advent literally means "arrival." Advent season once involved seasonal fasting, similar to Lent. Advent calendars are officially begun today, culminating on December 24. Advent calendars are *not* an ancient tradition, first appearing in nineteenth-century Germany, originally to educate children about Christmas, as well as count the days toward it.

Although the original Advent calendars were religious, they are now a popular secular holiday tradition, favored by manufacturers who wish to introduce potential customers to a variety of their wares. Many no longer recognize the Christian origins of Advent calendars and have adapted the concept to their own use. Options are only limited by creativity and imagination. They may be adapted for use in spellcasting or divination, moon phases, or, especially at this time of year, resolutions. For example, Advent-style calendars

may be used to teach runes or the Tarot's Major Arcana. For the latter, add twenty-two shuttered windows to a board or a box. Place one miniature Major Arcana card behind each. (Miniature cards are easily purchased.) Open one each day and learn about the card within. Likewise, New Year's resolutions are frequently abrupt, thus lending themselves to abandonment. Frustrated with something in your life, you vow to make a change in the New Year, but often within days, momentum is lost. Advent-style calendars can help reinforce your goals and intent. Choose the number of days deemed necessary and create a daily plan for yourself.

Bona Dea

See [May 1](#) for details of these now mysterious goddesses. Today, December 3 and [December 4](#) are feast days for them.

December 2

Saint Bibiana

According to legend, Bibiana was a Roman martyr. Her name may originally have been Viviana or Vibiana, but she is now commonly called Bibiana, a misspelling of Vibiana. Today is her feast.

The transformation of Vibiana into Bibiana may have been deliberate, an irreverent joke, as the new version resembles “bibulous,” defined as being excessively fond of alcohol. As a result, Saint Bibiana is now the go-to saint to relieve hangovers and headaches. She is sometimes treated as a joke, but she is a genuine saint, who is also the matron saint of torture victims and those suffering from mental illness and seizure disorders. She may be invoked for help with alcoholics, alcoholism, and other drinking disorders.

Light white candles for her.

December 3

Bona Dea

See [May 1](#) for details of these now mysterious goddesses. December 3 and [December 4](#) are feast days for them, as was [December 1](#).

December 4

Today is devoted to Saint Barbara and the spirits identified with her. Barbara was among those removed from the Vatican canon roll in 1969, as no evidence for her exists. That said, Barbara remains incredibly popular. If a Pagan goddess lies beneath the mask of the saint, her identity is unclear; however, Barbara's feast coincides with that of Fauna's. Alternatively, the guise of the saint may envelop a now-unknown Bona Dea, while some historians see vestiges of Hekate.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

BABA SHARKA

In Bulgaria, Saint Barbara has become identified with Baba Sharka, a personified spirit of smallpox. Barbara may be identified as Baba Sharka, as her antidote, or as both simultaneously.

As smallpox is now thankfully rare, Baba Sharka has become more or less (depending on regional or family traditions) associated with other illnesses that manifest on the skin, including chicken pox, measles, and rubella. Once upon a time, these illnesses were identified with Baba Sharka's now lesser-known sisters.

Baba Sharka announces her presence through the onset of these illnesses. Should Baba Sharka arrive, she must be treated with respect and kindness in order to earn her good graces rather than her wrath. Today is the time to appease Baba Sharka from afar so that she does not come to investigate your household. Offerings of honey are believed to appease her. She likes sweet foods in general, and dislikes the sour or spicy. Flat bread with honey is a favorite, as are sugar cubes and sweet liqueurs.

Eat pastry or baked goods today, offering a portion to her. Don't serve Baba Sharka inside—don't make her feel too welcome. Her portion may be respectfully placed outside in the yard or on the roof or windowsill. Alternatively, bring it to a crossroads or an open field. Meanwhile, to cover all bases, burn candles for Saint Barbara, requesting her blessings of good health, especially for children, perceived as especially vulnerable to Baba Sharka.

To prevent any forthcoming trouble from Baba Sharka, any activity utilizing pins, needles, or other pointy implements—beyond doing what’s necessary—is discouraged today. Sewing, needlework, knitting, even trussing a turkey—anything involving poking with a sharp object is perceived as mimicking marks on the skin indicating illness and may remind Baba Sharka of her purpose and true nature. This practice is intended to promote good health, so do not refrain from receiving necessary injections, as this defeats the purpose.

Baba Sharka is a shapeshifter. She may appear in the form of a small, haggard old woman with a young, naked child or as the child. She may appear homeless. Baba Sharka may be accompanied by a dog or a hen, but she may also appear in the form of dogs or hens. In Bulgarian villages, dogs were traditionally not allowed to roam free today, lest they bring Baba Sharka home with them. Regardless of the form in which she appears, Baba Sharka is an immortal spirit. She cannot be beaten, only mollified and appeased, so that she causes no harm or, at the very least, shows mercy. Behavior that irritates her—those needles and pins or any abuse shown to creatures because you fear they might be her in disguise—only elicits her wrath and displeasure.

BARBARA

Barbara is a mysterious saint. Numerous variations of her myth exist, with several places very adamantly claiming to be her origin, but there is no documented evidence for any of it. If there was a historical Barbara, then she lived and died in the fourth century; however, the first evidence of her as a saint is from the seventh century.

Barbara emerged as a saint extraordinaire, a guardian against natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, storms, lightning, and fires. She also protects against manmade dangers including bombs, guns, and land mines. Barbara is a great healer, especially of children. She is invoked to prevent sudden death but also for good and merciful deaths. Barbara is the matron saint of architects, ammunition workers, bomb technicians, firefighters, gunners, prisoners, miners, and soldiers. Barbara’s primary symbols are her tower, a chalice, a sword, and a lightning bolt.

In some Afro-Caribbean traditions, Barbara is believed to protect transgender people, but whether this is intended to be the saint herself or Shango (see [below](#)) is subject to debate. In parts of the Andes, she is known as Santa Wara Wara and associated with llamas and sheep. In Bulgaria and some other Slavic regions, women are encouraged to refrain from all but the most essential work today, instead spending their time honoring and celebrating this goddess-like saint.

Offer Barbara red candles; red wine, ideally in a beautiful chalice; peacock feathers; and images of towers. A number of magical folk traditions and oracles are exclusively intended for today.

Barbara's Boughs

European folk traditions recommend cutting twigs or small branches today and bringing them inside in attempts to force blooms by Christmas. In German, these are called *Barbarazweig*. The tradition is reputedly based on the legend that Barbara, lonely in her tower, found a withered cherry branch, which she watered daily, either with her tears or her drinking water. The branch bloomed on the day she died. Cherry branches are favored, but any type of flowering plant or tree may be used.

If Barbara's boughs are blooming or green by Christmas, anticipate a prosperous year ahead. Otherwise, tighten your belts and schedule some money spells.

Barbara's boughs can also help you make a decision, but you will need as many branches as you have choices. This was originally a romantic divination, ironically as Barbara herself fled marriage. However, it may be used as an oracle to help you choose which job to take or school to attend or anything where the choices are clear and distinct. If you are choosing between six schools, for example, six branches are needed, all of similar size, shape, and provenance. Place each in a water-filled vase, marking which branch represents which choice. The first to bloom or display signs of life indicates your best choice.

Barbarakuchen (Barbara Cake), a German loaf cake, is traditionally baked and eaten today in honor of the saint but may also be offered to her in tribute or as part of a request at any time.

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup sweet butter (not salted), softened, plus more for greasing the pan
1 cup baker's sugar, plus more for sugaring the pan
1 lemon, zested and juiced (organic preferred)
1 cup flour
1 cup cornstarch
¾ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
4 eggs, at room temperature
1 cup powdered sugar and about 2 tablespoons cool water, to create a glaze

This is traditionally baked in a loaf pan, as the shape is believed to resemble Barbara's tower.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Prepare an 8½ x 4½ x 2½ loaf pan by greasing it with butter and sprinkling it with sugar.

Shake out any excess sugar.

3. Grate the lemon peel, saving the zest. Squeeze the juice into a cup and set aside.
4. Blend the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl and set aside.
5. In a larger bowl, whip the butter and sugar with a hand mixer, until fluffy.
6. Add eggs, one at a time, to the butter and sugar, blending each one thoroughly before adding the next.
7. Blend the lemon zest into the butter, sugar, and eggs.
8. Gradually incorporate the dry ingredients into the batter, mixing thoroughly. As there is no milk or other liquid, the result will be thick.
9. Pour into the prepared loaf pan. Do not fill the pan to the top or it will overflow as the cake rises: approximately two-thirds full should be fine.
10. Bake 45 minutes to one hour. The cake is ready when a knife or skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.
11. Turn out onto a wire rack and allow the cake to cool for at least two hours.
12. The glaze varies depending on region with some preferring chocolate. It may also be left unglazed. For a traditional lemon glaze, set the cake on the wire rack inside a larger pan, to catch any excess glaze drips. Mix the powdered sugar with the saved lemon juice, adding extra water bit by bit as needed to form a drizzleable but not overly thin glaze (most likely you won't need more than a tablespoon or two). Once the mixture is smooth, pour it over the cake. When the glaze hardens, it's ready to eat.

FAUNA (THE BONA DEA)

As her name suggests, Fauna is a goddess of wild nature, wildlife, forests, and fertility. Little is now known about her because so many of her rites were secret. She is the daughter of the horned deity Faunus, whose feast is tomorrow. Theirs is an uneasy relationship: she may also be his consort, but that role may not be consensual. Fragments of myths describe how he beat her with myrtle branches and raped her. Fauna, like her Italian counterparts Flora and Fortuna, does not align easily with any Greek goddess, and so she is typically overlooked in modern mythology books. But she was a significant and great goddess, considered a great healer and among the most ancient in Rome's pantheon.

Fauna has a private face and a public one. Fauna is a Bona Dea, possibly *the* Bona Dea, a goddess of Mysteries, venerated exclusively by women. Her private rites were held in the homes of leading magistrates, supervised by their wives, who were assisted by the Vestal Virgins. Fauna also had a shrine on Rome's Aventine Hill, which simultaneously served as a healing center—essentially an ancient sacred hospital—and which was surrounded by a garden of medicinal plants. Snakes, which the Romans associated with healing, lived in her shrine.

They are Fauna's sacred creatures and messengers. Today is the public feast of Fauna, the culmination of Mysteries celebrated on December 1 and 3.

There's controversy now as to whether wine and myrtle were banned from the rites of Fauna. To be on the safe side, omit them. Offer milk and good deeds on behalf of wild nature.

OYA

In Brazil, the orisha Oya is identified with Saint Barbara. She may be called Santa Barbara Africana, although that name is also used by others, including Shango. Please see [October 15](#) for more information about this powerful spirit of winds and hurricanes.

SHANGO

Also spelled Chango and Xango, this orisha is an exceptionally beloved spirit, the lord of lightning and thunder, virility, warfare, drumming, and martial arts. In Yoruba cosmology, lightning is understood as an instrument of divine justice, protection, and purification. It is Shango's primary symbol and what connects him to Barbara, the saint to whom he is syncretized and whose feast he shares. In Santeria, references to Santa Barbara are likely to camouflage Shango. Shango's own mythos celebrates him as the paragon of the "ladies' man"—a suave, smooth womanizer. His identification with the young virgin martyr is often held up as an example of the ridiculousness of syncretism, but their connection is not random. When enslaved Africans were given holy cards of Saint Barbara, what they saw was the lightning bolt in the image, not the little white girl.

Shango's colors are red and white. His number is 6. He rides a magical white stallion. Offer him mugwort, High John the Conqueror, bananas, thunderstones, red apples, and red wine. His altars may be placed within or beside fireplaces and hearths. Petitions made to him during thunderstorms are believed most effective. If today is stormy, it's an exceptionally strong time.

December 5

Today is a day of wild, rambunctious horned deities: the Roman feast of Faunus and the night Krampus runs rampant.

The Faunalia

Today is the Roman festival of Faunus, who may possibly be Rome's most primordial spirit, but is certainly among the most ancient. Also known as Lupercus, he is among the spirits venerated during February's Lupercalia. Faunus is a wild goat spirit: he may manifest with a human head and torso and a goat's nether regions or as a virile man sporting goat horns, the clue to his identity. Although it is often assumed that any goat-footed deity must be Pan, they are two distinct beings. Pan is friendlier. Faunus is no musician, although he, too, instills panic.

Faunus is the primordial Wild Man of the Woods, a spirit of wild nature and the irrepressible procreative urge. He is the spirit of fertility that is impossible to suppress, the embodiment of the life force, libido, and naked male virility, simultaneously benevolent and terrifying. The Romans invoked him for fertility. The power he radiates is so intense that merely to be in his presence is believed to heal infertility. Faunus is so old that he is incapable of speech. He communicates but not verbally, although he makes noises. Faunus typically manifests in the form of nightmares, though it is not his intention to be frightening—he just is. He is not a gentle spirit, but wild and rough. Although he may resemble a human, he is not one. You can communicate with him but not reason with him—that's not who he is.

Faunus ritually bestows fertility by slapping women's hands with blessed, sacred goatskin leather thongs, consecrated during the Lupercalia. The rituals have been lost; don't attempt to reproduce them. However, women report having these experiences in their dreams. If he visits you and hits you in your dream, this is his blessing. If he doesn't hit you in your dreams, hold up your hands, palms up, to transmit your desire. He may be invoked alongside Juno and his daughter/consort Fauna, who serve as his translators and may be able to keep him in check, at least a little. They will share an altar together.

Faunus is also a guardian of nature and the arbiter of the balance between wolves and goats, protecting both. If you seek his blessings—because you wish to be pregnant or wish to protect wolves—this is an excellent time to request his presence with the caveat that once in your life, he may not depart. If you can coexist with this ancient, wild, irrepressible dream visitor, he is a powerful ally. He prefers women and can be extremely sympathetic and protective toward them but can also become sexually aggressive in dreams. If this is a trigger, then it may be advisable to seek other spirits. Offer him spring water, not alcohol, which just makes him even wilder and more incomprehensible. Donations and good works on behalf of wolves and the wilderness are also appropriate.

offerings.

Krampus Night

In his modern manifestations, Krampus is Saint Nick's helper, and Krampus Night coincides with Saint Nicholas' Eve. In America, Santa Claus is a fixture of Christmas, but in Europe, Saint Nicholas is celebrated on his own feast. Saint Nick is usually accompanied by a helper, although their identities differ by location. Krampus is the helper throughout Germany and Central and Eastern Europe. Saint Nick gives gifts to good children and blesses them, while the misbehavers are left to Krampus who punishes them or steals them away, either to his own realm or to Hell, although sometimes Krampus eats children. Like department store Santas, there's a long history of men masquerading as Nicholas and Krampus.

Krampus manifests as a goat-man hybrid. He may be a man with horns and hooves, or he may be a black or red goat who walks upright like a man. Sometimes he's a dead ringer for the Christian devil, but he may also resemble Pan.

Although Krampus accompanies Saint Nicholas, he is an independent entity, and there is a long history of masking rituals tonight, where hordes of people dress as Krampus. Sometimes portrayed in chains, the implication is that he is an old, unrepentant Pagan spirit, pressed into service by Nicholas.

Krampus is a trickster with a glint in his eyes. He has huge appetites, lusty as a goat, enjoying sex, food, and drink. He is sometimes portrayed carrying children in a bundle on his back, which has been interpreted as his stealing children. However, when Saint Nick is portrayed with bags of gifts, he's interpreted as giving them, not taking them. Krampus may be a disguised fertility spirit. His emblem is a bundle of birch twigs, with which he beats children. His bundle is sufficient to identify his presence in old postcards and is not dissimilar from Faunus' goatskin thongs.

In the twenty-first century, Krampus has taken on a life of his own, totally divorced from Saint Nick. The star of horror movies, he may perhaps also be invoked for fertility, fun, and material goods by the equally unrepentant. Tonight is the time to make that request, as well as to deck the halls with his image.

In Albania and elsewhere in the Balkans, Saint Nicholas' Eve is conflated with pre-Christian rituals for the dead. Prepare a feast to

be shared by the saint, the living, and the dead. Prepare plates for all who will dine: one per living family member, one for Nick, and as many as is deemed necessary for the dead, who may be willing to share a large plate or platter. Light a candle in the window and open a door to the outside, inviting the saint and your dead to enter and dine. Leave the door open, even just a crack, until you feel the ritual is complete, but at least until the candle burns out naturally. Keep an eye on the candle. The longer it burns, the more blessings you are believed to receive from your visitors.



December 6

Saint Nicholas

In America, Santa Claus is deeply identified with Christmas, but today is Saint Nick's very own feast. It is traditional to seek his blessings today, especially near the sea, if possible. He is an incredibly beloved saint, and today is gift-giving time in some regions, with Nicholas given credit for them.

The historical Saint Nicholas—and there is one—was a fourth-century Bishop of Myra, now in modern Turkey, who died in approximately 350. His remains are in the Basilica di San Nicola in Bari, Italy. He is the subject of numerous legends, which emphasize his kindness and generosity and his capacity to produce miracles. These include resurrecting dead boys slaughtered during a famine by a butcher who intended to sell their flesh as pickled pork, and providing bags of gold to young girls so impoverished they were considering prostitution.

Although ostensibly the same being, Saint Nicholas and Santa Claus manifest very differently. Whereas Santa Claus is a jolly gift-giver who comes down the chimney on Christmas Eve, runs a factory staffed by elves at the North Pole, and drives a sleigh pulled by reindeer, Saint Nicholas knocks on the door in broad daylight, always dignified and dressed in his bishop's robes. He does not say "ho, ho, ho!" but may ask children religious questions before determining whether they have been "naughty or nice." Rather than elves, Nicholas may be

accompanied by a helper, who differs by region. Central Europe's Krampus is most famous, but in Bulgaria, Nicholas gets help from a magic carp. Other helpers include Knecht Ruprecht, Belsnickel, and Père Fouettard. Because Nicholas is loved in so many different parts of the globe, depending on region, he has absorbed traits and functions of several pre-Christian deities, especially Odin and Poseidon.

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of children, mariners, merchants, pirates, pawnbrokers, distillers, border guards, sex workers, beggars, butchers, bankers, and unmarried women, especially single mothers. Nicholas is the guardian of animals, and it's traditional for beasts of burden to be given a holiday today. Bulgarian tradition recommends cooking a whole carp for dinner today, a fish closely associated with the saint. Find and preserve the cross-shaped crown bone in the carp's head. It can serve as an amulet either pinned to children's clothing to preserve them from the Evil Eye or buried on your property to keep it safe and under Nick's watchful eye.



The Season of the Twins

Today begins a month-long period known as the Season of the Twins associated with the Vodou twin spirits known as the Marassa. The season begins on the Feast of Saint Nicholas, who is sometimes identified as the twins' father in Vodou cosmology, and continues through January 6, the feast of the Epiphany or the Three Kings, highlighted by the Marassa's own personal feast on December 28. Ideally and in a perfect world, this entire month-long period is a magical time for children, full of treats, gifts, and fun. (See [September 26](#) for more about magical twin energy.)

December 7

This was once widely considered an unlucky or inauspicious day; please see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information.

Nail Down Protection Spell

This spell is influenced by Egyptian magical texts, but the concept of nailing down magic is widespread: for example, the love spell dedicated to Saint Helena (see [May 21](#)) or the modern custom of using railroad spikes for home protection associated with Ogun. The resemblance to Jewish mezuzahs may not be coincidental.

1. Visualize your home protected from all sources of danger, both known and unknown.
2. Hold fast to this image of your safe and happy home as you drive two nails into your doorposts, one on the right and one on the left.
3. If you wished to combine this with an appeal to your favorite protective deity, whether Sekhmet, Archangel Michael, Saint Nicholas, or any other, it wouldn't hurt.



Rohatsu Eve

Rohatsu, the Japanese holiday honoring the enlightenment of the Buddha, is celebrated on December 8. It is customary for the night preceding the holiday to be spent in deep meditation.

Spirit of the Day

KA'AHU PAHUA

The name "Pearl Harbor" is no affectation. Until the late nineteenth century, it was famous for its oyster beds, which provided sustenance for local people, as well as pearls. Ka'ahu Pahua, Queen of the Sharks, is the guardian of Pearl

Harbor, 'Ewa Beach, and Oahu in general, protecting people from menacing sharks. Ka'ahu Pahua had a human incarnation. She and her brother were born with red hair—an indication, in Hawaiian cosmology, of spirit ancestry. In Hawaiian cosmology, certain clans have kinship associations with specific creatures, and Ka'ahu Pahua's associations with sharks are primal. A shark deity eventually transformed the siblings into sacred sharks, but Ka'ahu Pahua still recalls what it means to be human and feels empathy toward us. She is simultaneously a guardian of humans and sharks, as well as a shark herself.

Ka'ahu Pahua's home is an underwater cave in Pearl Harbor. She manifests as a woman with red hair, a mermaid, or a shark. Today, on the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, offer her flower leis, images of sharks, and good deeds on behalf of sharks, as well as preservation of Oahu's flora and fauna.

December 8

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

This Christian holiday commemorates the conception of Mary, Mother of Jesus, believed by church dogma to have been born free from original sin, hence the name “immaculate conception.” This feast first appeared in the Eastern Church during the seventh century with the date calculated to nine months before Mary's Nativity. (See [September 8](#).) It was celebrated in England by the eleventh century. Mary and the numerous spirits identified with her are celebrated today.

Rohatsu

This holiday celebrates the enlightenment of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Its name literally means “Eighth Day of the Twelfth Month” and was originally calculated via the Japanese lunar calendar, as may still be done in some shrines and temples. The lunar calendar date, likely to be in January, is still in use elsewhere in East Asia. However, with the Westernization of the Japanese calendar during the Meiji Restoration, the date was standardized as December 8, and Zen Buddhists celebrate today. Traditionally, today is the culmination of a seven- or eight-day period of minimal speech and intensive meditation.

Spirits of the Day

AYIDA WEDO

Ayida Wedo, also spelled Aïdo-Hwedo, is the Rainbow Serpent who helped create the universe with her beloved, Damballah. (See [March 17](#).) If you have seen a rainbow, you have witnessed the majesty of Ayida Wedo. A root lwa from Dahomey, she was transported to Haiti alongside her enslaved devotees. Syncretized to the Immaculate Conception, she is celebrated today. Images of Mary may be used to represent her, but images of rainbows and snakes with rainbow-colored scales are also used. She and Damballah epitomize the happy marriage. She may be invoked for blessings upon your unions. On a grander scale, Ayida Wedo is a guardian of creation and the universe. Like Damballah, Ayida Wedo is traditionally given white foods and beverages, such as eggs, cream, and white rice.

EZILI FREDA DAHOMEY

Among the spirits identified with Mary, today is also Ezili Freda Dahomey's feast. However, she is also celebrated for the rest of December or at any time during this month. See [June 9](#) for information regarding this beautiful Vodou spirit.

YEMAYA

As she is syncretized to Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, today is also a feast of the orisha Yemaya, Queen of the Sea. (See [January 1](#).) Yemaya is also feted on New Year's Eve. Devotees may begin celebrating her now, continuing through January 1.

December 9

Nine Pins More Money Spell

This spell results in a talisman intended to draw prosperity to your home or business. It requires a money-drawing oil, such as the formula in the [January 4](#) entry, but another may be substituted. You will also need a head of garlic, one corn kernel, red or green thread, a brass tack, one regular-sized nail, and nine small nails or metal pins.

1. Drive the brass tack into one end of the garlic head and the bigger nail into the other.
2. Using the thread, tie the corn kernel to the nail.
3. Stick the nine pins all over the garlic head.
4. Wind the thread around each one of these pins, visualizing your success all the while. Incorporate rhymes, chants, and invocations as desired, such as “By the power of nine, this spell is mine!”
5. Tie the end of the thread around the brass tack, making a knot, and cut off any excess.
6. Brush money-drawing oil over the garlic head and let it sit overnight, ideally exposed to moonlight.
7. Once it’s dry, it’s ready. Hang it from the front door or over the lintel.
8. Dab it with a bit more oil weekly or after an especially profitable day.
9. Should you ever see signs of decomposition or rot, dispose of the talisman immediately and make a new one.



December 10

Number 10 Protection Incense

Numerologically speaking, 10 is often interpreted as a number of completion. This protective incense derives its power from the number and combination of ingredients, as well as the actual botanicals themselves. It’s an unusual formula, as it draws upon plants from northern climates, as opposed to the tropics from whence most incense plants derive. Substitute other botanicals, if desired, but maintain the number 10. Today is a good day to craft or burn the incense, but

also ideal for gathering and preparing the plants, which must first be dried.

1. Blend the following botanicals together:

Angelica, Avens or Geum, Basil, Bay Leaves, Juniper, Mugwort, Rosemary, Saint John's Wort, Wormwood, Yarrow.

2. Grind them in a mortar and pestle, focusing on the desired outcome as you work. The variety of plants may be used to enhance personal spiritual protection or to drive off ghosts, malevolent spirits, and even remove hexes.

December 11

Beyond the Pillars

The number 11 is associated with spiritual awakening in numerology (see [November 11](#)). It is an unusual number because it may be read two ways: 11 is eleven but, depending on the font used, also resembles a Roman numeral 2. It's customary in numerology to break down double digit numbers to single ones by adding them together. For example, $11 = 1 + 1$, which equals 2. Numerologically, 11 radiates both powers—the special qualities of its own having to do with enlightenment and awakening, as well as the doubling effect of 2—and is considered to be an exceptionally powerful number. 11 also resembles a pair of pillars, such as those depicted on the second card of the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot, the High Priestess, which were inspired by the pillars Jachin and Boaz in the Jerusalem Temple.

Take some quiet time today, if possible, whether in meditation or psychic journeying. The image of pillars can facilitate the process. Visualize yourself passing through them: What lies beyond? Who do you become? What will you learn? The Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot Moon card (as well as those from derivative decks) features pillars in a mysterious landscape and serves as an excellent prop. It's a spiritually stimulating exercise that may be done anytime but may be most potent when attuned to the number 11.

December 12

Today is 12/12, the twelfth day of the twelfth month. In numerology, twelve is a number of great esoteric significance, believed to radiate spiritual and metaphysical completion. While the number 10 signals completion on a material or mortal level, twelve transcends that, indicating cosmic order and perfection instead. It is a number of spiritual stability and good fortune. The number 12 permeates mythology and religion; for example, the 12 Olympian deities, the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 12 Apostles of Jesus.

Tonight marks the beginning of an intense period of spiritual and magical activity that will continue through the first week of January. Pay attention to your dreams during this period. If spiritual activity (ghosts, spirits) makes you nervous, take magical precautions. Shore up your defenses. If, however, you find it euphoric, make sure your own energy stores are kept replenished and that you ground yourself periodically.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

GUADALUPE

The Lady of Guadalupe is the matron saint of Mexico and the Empress of the Americas. Today is her feast day. Her shrine in Mexico City is the site of one of the world's great pilgrimages. Alongside the Lady of Lourdes, she is the most famous Marian apparition.

Guadalupe rose to fame in the eighteenth century, as the heroine of the Mexican Revolution. Her image is ubiquitous in Mexico and elsewhere, too. She appears on murals, t-shirts, and tattoos, as well as in churches. There is no miracle she is believed incapable of delivering. Offer her roses and other flowers, candles, and incense. Should she provide a large miracle, a pilgrimage to her shrine, donations to its upkeep, or sponsoring someone else's trip may be in order.

SAINT LUCY'S EVE

Tomorrow is the feast of Saint Lucy, so tonight is her eve. It's considered an exceptionally magical night and a prime opportunity for divination and spellcasting of all kinds.

German folk tradition marks tonight as the beginning of the upsurge of spiritual activity associated with the Wild Hunt. Although these celestial riders have been present for months, tonight they are at full power and will continue their revelry nonstop until after January 6. Witches and practitioners of the

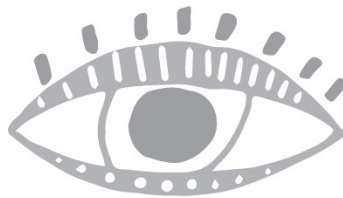
magical arts have traditionally reveled with them. Those who fear them are advised to take precaution.

Bohemian folk tradition suggests that Lucy herself is out hunting for evildoers tonight. When she finds them, she stuffs them in her basket and carries them into deep subterranean caverns where she slices them open, guts them, fills them with straw, and adds them to the doll collection she keeps there. See [December 13](#) for information about Lucy and Lussi Night.

THE YULE LADS

Thirteen Icelandic trolls, now affectionately known as the Yule Lads, are especially active for thirteen nights starting tonight. They descend from their mountain stronghold, one by one, to play very specific and anticipated pranks. Each one remains among the people for thirteen days counting from the night of their appearance. Ancient spirits, they seem to have evolved and mellowed over the centuries. Once accused of eating human children, they are now widely considered merely tricksters. Objects of affection and amusement, rather than fear, they have evolved into Yule-time gift-givers. Children leave shoes out on windowsills overnight during the thirteen nights of their rampage, which coincide with the thirteen nights preceding Christmas. If kids have been well behaved, the Yule Lads place candy and treats into their shoes. If they have behaved badly, the Yule Lads leave raw, rotting potatoes instead.

The Yule Lads begin their reign of pranks tonight. Their names and their specific number have varied. Tonight marks the appearance of the first of the Yule Lads: Stekkjastaur (Sheep Cote Clod) arrives to harass sheep, although his peg leg prevents him from being particularly efficient. He remains until December 25.



December 13

Under the Old Julian Calendar, today was widely celebrated as the solstice, at

least by those who preferred fixed dates. It was the longest night, heralding the rebirth of the sun. Even now, the nights are very long and dark. Regardless of calendar change, today is extremely beneficial for any kind of divination, spellcasting, and magical or spiritual activity.

Today is the feast of two powerful saints, both associated with enhanced vision of all kinds: physical, spiritual, and magical. Should it rain today, collect the rain, as this water will allegedly heal eye disorders, promote clairvoyance, and stimulate your Third Eye. It may be preserved by labeling the container and refrigerating or freezing.

Today marks twelve days before Christmas. In some regions, these days are considered more spiritually significant than the twelve that follow it.

Saints and Spirits of the Day

SAINT LUCY

According to her legend, Lucy, who died circa 304, was a young Sicilian noblewoman who secretly converted to Christianity. Several versions of her legend exist, all involving eyes. A great saint who can perform all miracles, officially Lucy is the matron saint of writers and the visually impaired. Less officially, she is the matron of clairvoyants and scryers.

Lucy's feast once coincided with the solstice, the longest night that is considered the rebirth of light and the sun. Lucy is the light bringer. Her name derives from "lux" the Latin word for light. In the darkness, Lucy helps us see. She heals all eye and vision disorders, restoring sight, literally and metaphorically. She prevents and removes the Evil Eye and promotes clairvoyance. "Lucy's Light" is a folk name for psychic vision and second sight.

Candles for Lucy

Today is the ideal time to request Lucy's assistance. If you need Lucy to heal one of your eyes, light one white or yellow candle for her today. If both eyes are afflicted, light two white or yellow candles. If you need her help with the Evil Eye, arrange five white candles in the shape of a cross.

Throughout Norway and Sweden where she is known as Santa Lucia, festivities today are perceived as secular events, despite their religious origins. Events may be held in schools as well as homes. Young girls dressed in white dresses with red sashes, understood as embodying Santa Lucia, wear candle crowns or carry a candle. Traditions vary, depending on household, as to who will represent Saint Lucy—typically either the oldest or the youngest daughter of

a family. Wearing her candle crown, she rises before dawn to prepare and serve breakfast to the household, typically coffee and saffron buns, known as *lussekatter* or “Lucy’s cats,” a reference to Freya with whom Lucy is syncretized. (See [October 21](#) for details of Freya.)

Depending on region, Lucy possesses a shadow side, one acknowledged by folklore but not by the Church. Lucy is a witch-saint who rides with the Wild Hunt. Whether there are two beings who share the same name and feast day or whether Lucy is just a particularly complicated saint is subject to debate.

In Hungary and former Hungarian territories, people are traditionally discouraged from doing any work today. Instead, the day is spent celebrating Lucy and reveling with her. (And there’s no point resisting, as Lucy will mess up any work done today anyway.) Giving, receiving, or requesting loans is also discouraged, as the funds will just end up going to Lucy. It is, however, the moment to begin construction of a magical Saint Lucy Chair, which must be complete by Christmas Eve.

The chair must be constructed from nine distinct types of wood but without any metal, including nails. If constructed correctly, it provides a brief window into what is usually invisible.

1. Fill your pockets with loose poppyseeds.
2. Bring the chair to midnight mass on Christmas Eve.
3. Place the chair at the back of the pews so that when standing on top of it, you overlook the seated congregation. Allegedly, if the maker of the chair does this, any secret witches will be revealed by the invisible horns on their heads that the chair has made visible.
4. However, *you* will not be a secret. The witches will see you, too. You will be safe only once the chair is destroyed, but this can only be done at the site where the chair was built. Because their lives may depend on maintaining their secret identities, the witches will do their best to stop you from reaching home.
5. It’s advised that you leave before Mass is finished, taking your chair with you. If the witches follow you, toss a handful of poppyseeds at them. This type of supernatural witch is so obsessive-compulsive that she must stop to pick up each tiny seed. Because the chairs are destroyed as part of the ritual, few survive; however, at least one is on display in the Ethnographic Museum of Budapest.

LUSSI

The spelling “Lussi” distinguishes the witch-like aspects of Santa Lucia, who is so beloved in Scandinavia. Although the day belongs to Lucia, tonight is *Lussinatta* or Lussi Night. Lussi leads a spectral procession of trolls, witches, and spirits through the night sky, pausing only to sneak down chimneys in order to abscond with disobedient children. Lussi’s parade of spirits fly through the skies nightly until Christmas Eve. As Lussi Night is considered a time of danger, the practice of staying awake all night, known as *Lussevaka*, arose. The pious may spend the night reciting prayers and psalms. Others throw parties to pass the time.

SAINT ODILE

Saint Odile shares her feast with Lucy, and the similarities don’t stop there. Both are associated with eyes and vision. Both heal physical disorders but are also intensely associated with clairvoyance and second sight. Both are associated with subversive magical and spiritual traditions. Their emblems—a pair of disembodied eyes—are also almost identical. While Lucy’s eyes are on a plate, in her hand, or free-floating, Odile’s are consistently presented atop a book.

She is the matron saint of Alsace, as well as of soldiers, warriors, knights, prophets, clairvoyants, visionaries, psychic questers, and physicians and healers who specialize in eyes. Odile is closely associated with legends of the Grail and is the guardian of those who continue to search for it.

OSHUN

In Brazil, images of Saint Lucy may be used to represent *Oxum Opara*, a warrior aspect of the orisha Oshun, who epitomizes Shakespeare’s phrase, “though she be but little, she is fierce.” Please see [September 8](#) for more about this beautiful and powerful orisha.

SAULÉ

The Baltic goddess Saulé has developed associations with Saint Lucy. Saulé and her daughters dance in celebration today, and those seeking a fixed date to venerate her may join them. The name Saulé (pronounced SOW-lay) literally means “sun.” Saulé is the sun, as well as its personification. In Baltic cosmology, the sun is female while the moon is male and Saulé’s ex-husband. Their divorce was contentious—he flirted with her daughters and even tried to marry one—which is the reason why the sun and the moon are not in the sky simultaneously.

Saulé is a benevolent goddess from whom demons flee, a reason why the Pagan Balts believed that day is safer than night. She is *everyone's* goddess—the sun does not discriminate but shines on us all. Offerings and appeals to Saulé are done bareheaded—no hats, scarves, or other head coverings—so that the sun may shine directly upon you without obstructions. Her power waxes and wanes with what were perceived as cycles of the sun.

As days grow shorter, Saulé weakens during her annual struggle with forces of darkness. Rituals intended to strengthen her are coordinated with the winter solstice. Festivals honoring Saulé begin with the solstice and continue through Epiphany. Saulé is present as the sun in the sky but also manifests in the guise of a woman so beautiful that it's almost painful to gaze upon her. Her hair, crown, and clothing are gold, but her shoes are silver. Her emblem is the wheel, and apple and linden trees are sacred to her. Saulé is a great healer and a generous giver of blessings.

YULE LADS

Tonight, the second of the Yule Lads, Giljagaur (Gully Gawkw), descends from the mountains to hide in gullies, awaiting opportunities to sneak into cow and sheep pens and steal milk. He will remain until December 26. For more information on the Yule Lads, please see [December 12](#).

December 14

The Yule Lads

The third Yule Lad, Stúfur (Stubby), descends from their mountain stronghold to sneak into homes tonight. He likes to steal pans in order to scrape out and consume any remaining food. (He is among the easier trolls to foil. Just make sure all pots and pans are scrupulously clean.) He will remain among people until December 27. For more information about these Icelandic trolls, please see [December 12](#).

December 15

The Yule Lads

Tonight, the fourth of the Yule Lads, Þvörusleikir (Spoon-Licker), descends from the mountains to sneak into homes and lick all the spoons. “Þvörur” refers to a specific type of long-handled Icelandic spoon, but nothing indicates that other types of spoons are safe. He remains among people until December 28. Please see [December 12](#) for more details on these Icelandic spirits.

December 16

Fairy Queen Eve

Beginning after dark, Fairy Queen Eve may be celebrated for one night or as the start of a nine-day ritual. The origins of this increasingly popular modern holiday are mysterious. They may derive from Marian devotions or from rites of Maeve, the Irish fairy queen. The very mystery of the holiday allows great leeway in how and who you celebrate. It is a night to seek the blessings of fairy queens. *The Witches’ Almanac* recommends ringing a silver bell nine times prior to lighting a white candle. Ask for the fairy queen’s blessing and then await her response. Ideally, you will receive a vision or visitation.

The Yule Lads

Tonight, the fifth of the Yule Lads, Pottaskefill (Pot-Scraper), descends from the mountains to invade homes, lick pots, and steal any food found within them. He remains until December 29. For more information regarding the Yule Lads, please see [December 12](#).

December 17

The Saturnalia

Io Saturnalia! That’s the correct salutation for this holiday. *Io* conveys joy, and so this is the equivalent of “Merry Christmas” or “Happy holidays!” Today is the

first day of what was perhaps the happiest of Rome's many festivals and the most beloved. Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus described it as "the best of days."

The tradition of decorating homes with greenery, especially holly, ivy, and mistletoe, is ancient, pre-Christian, and persistent. In the seventh century, after centuries of protest, the Church acquiesced to its use, and decking the halls has been part of Christmas festivities ever since.

The Saturnalia is a multiday festival, but the number of days varied over the centuries. By the late Republic, it continued until December 23, and that is the date now usually considered the conclusion. All work was suspended. Schools, courts, and most businesses were closed. It was a time given over to fun and festivity. Gifts were given. There were parties, feasting, games, and role reversals among masters, servants, and slaves, as well as between adults and children. Homes were hung with greenery, especially evergreen branches bearing red berries, the forerunner of decking halls with boughs of holly. Garlands and wreaths of holly and ivy, pine boughs, and other foliage were draped over doors and windows, spiritually safeguarding these thresholds. Other home decorations included candles and images of Saturn.

Spirits and Saints of the Day

Today is another feast of Saint Barbara. Folk tradition suggests that how you spend your day today impacts the next twelve months, so do your best to spend it happily and as you desire. See [December 4](#) for more about Barbara.

BABALU AYÉ

"*Babalu!*" When Americans heard Desi Arnaz's signature song, many assumed it was a novelty record or that he was singing about a woman. In fact, it was a tribute to an exceptionally powerful orisha, although *Babalu Ayé* is not his name, but a title usually translated as *Father of the Earth*. His true name is a secret for the initiated, not to be used casually, as it's deemed dangerous to assume too much familiarity.

Babalu Ayé is the spirit of smallpox, although he transcends this. Not merely a disease spirit, he is incredibly loved, as well as dreaded and respected. Babalu is the most famous of worldwide smallpox spirits. (See Baba Sharka on [December 4](#).) Like them, he is simultaneously the embodiment of smallpox *and* its cure. To be in the presence of smallpox is to be in the presence of Babalu Ayé. In the twentieth century, smallpox was largely eradicated, but Babalu's influence has grown, not lessened. He also has dominion over any illness or condition that manifests on the skin or leaves marks on it and is now the patron of those suffering from AIDS. Those who've experienced these illnesses may consider him their patron. He is also the patron of outcasts, the humble and oppressed, regardless of health history.

His symbols include the broom and the dogs who are his constant companions, stolen from Ogun's pack by Shango, who sought to assuage Babalu's loneliness. He is syncretized to Saint Lazarus and so shares today's feast. There are two men named Lazarus in the New Testament, and veneration of Babalu unifies them. (See [below](#).) The iconography now most associated with Babalu is that of Lazarus the Leper.

Only true devotees and the initiated maintain permanent altars for Babalu. Others create temporary ones to create lines of communication with him and serve as visual requests, such as the one below, but take them down promptly so that he doesn't feel too at home. Offer him popcorn, roasted corn, and sesame seed cookies. Babalu drinks fine white wine. Do *not* give him water, as it irritates his sores. Soak bread in milk for his dogs. He is also given cowrie shells and milagros—small images of anatomical parts, such as legs, arms, breasts, and hearts, used to symbolize an illness or the part of the body that requires healing. It's traditional to give Babalu inexpensive milagros when requesting his aid, promising life-sized ones carved from precious metals should he provide a life-saving miracle. These may be viewed at the Shrine of Saint Lazarus in El Rincon, Cuba.

Ritual Request that Babalu Ayé Remove Illness or Infection

1. Place a raffia cloth atop a flat surface to create a simple temporary altar.
2. Three food items will be placed atop the altar as offerings for Babalu: a glass of excellent white wine, a bowl filled with milk in which a slice of bread is soaking, and a bowl of popcorn that has been drizzled with palm oil. This altar is now a focal point for you to communicate with Babalu, pray, and petition him. Tell him precisely what you need.

3. The popcorn must remain on this altar for seventeen days (Babalu's special number), although you may remove the wine, bread, and milk after twenty-four hours, if you choose. Don't consume them but dispose of them respectfully, outside your home.
4. These seventeen days are your opportunity to continue to invoke Babalu. Do not bother him for small things. It must be worth seventeen days of focused prayer and petition. Always be extremely polite and deferential to him. Remember that he is the embodiment of terrifying illnesses. He can bring whatever he can remove. Although some saints and spirits tolerate and perhaps enjoy demands and threats, he is not one of them.
5. After seventeen days, dismantle the altar. Bring the popcorn outside and feed it to birds.

SAINT LAZARUS OF BETHANY

The New Testament recounts that Lazarus lived with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, in Bethany, near Jerusalem. Jesus was a family friend and frequent visitor. The *Gospel of John* recounts how Martha, mourning the death of her brother, went to Jesus and berated him, asserting that Lazarus would not have died had Jesus been present. Lazarus, dead for four days, had already been buried. (Jewish custom is for immediate burials, typically within twenty-four hours.) However, Jesus returned with Martha and miraculously resurrected Lazarus, returning him to life. Today is his feast. Lazarus is usually venerated in the company of his sisters.

But there is another Lazarus in the New Testament, this one a leper, the subject of a parable in which Jesus describes how a poor leper lay dying on the doorstep of a rich man's house, his only comfort his loyal dogs. Although he was at the front door and could not be missed, the rich man never showed him the slightest kindness. Jesus explained that after death, Lazarus went straight to Heaven, but the rich man traveled to a different destination after his own death. The feast of Lazarus the Leper is celebrated on June 21.

Over the centuries, the tendency has been to celebrate Lazarus the Leper on the feast of Lazarus of Bethany. The rise of Santeria has increased devotion to Lazarus exponentially, but it almost invariably camouflages devotion to Babalu Ayé.

SATURN

Saturn is white-bearded Father Time, as well as the prototype of the Grim

Reaper. Surviving Roman imagery shows Saturn as a veiled, bearded man holding a sickle or scythe, ostensibly emblems of his role as an agricultural deity, although also the tool used to castrate his father Uranus. He may lurk under the guise of Santa Claus, not the red-bearded fellow, but early depictions of Santa as a cloaked or robed white-bearded wanderer bearing gifts, as seen in early twentieth-century postcard art.

Those born with Saturnian signs Capricorn or Aquarius prominent in their natal charts may consider him their patron, as can farmers and those who work with or preserve seeds. Holly is among Saturn's sacred plants. The Romans decorated their homes with holly wreathes and gifted these to each other. He is also associated with pine trees and plants like aconite, henbane, mandrake, hellebore, and hemp, which have associations with shamans and witches. Offer Saturn wine and incense and give gifts to others in his honor.

SIMON BOLIVAR

Simon Bolivar led Bolivia (named in his honor), Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and his homeland Venezuela to independence. He died on this date in 1830, and is now venerated as a folk saint, and is also an important spirit in the pantheon of Maria Lionza where he is the leader and most powerful member of the Court of Liberators. (See [October 12](#) for details on Maria Lionza.)

Bolivar is invoked to heal illnesses and win battles, literal and metaphoric. He is requested to help navigate government agencies for any reason, but especially when seeking employment.

Either light three candles for him—one yellow, one blue, and one red, the colors of the Venezuelan flag—or light one gold candle, flanked with a glass of water on one side and a glass of high-quality whisky on the other.

THE YULE LADS

Tonight marks the appearance of the sixth Yule Lad. Askasleikir (Bowl Licker) descends from their mountain stronghold to sneak inside homes, where he lurks under beds waiting for opportunities to steal bowls. His name references “askur”—a type of Icelandic bowl—but it's unclear whether he only wants these or whether any bowl is at risk. He will remain until December 30. For more information on the Yule Lads, please see [December 12](#).

December 18

Horse Spell

Today is a day of equine energy. Horses are among the animals most closely associated with magic power. They are venerated on their own and serve as mounts for assorted spirits, especially fairies. Merely being in the presence of a healthy horse is believed to boost your own magical prowess, no need to ride or even touch it, although the closer your relationship, the greater the blessings. Because of their size, they have rarely been associated with witches' familiars, although modern miniature horses are emerging as extremely popular emotional support animals. That said, horses are no strangers to magic spells and divination.

If you have access to horses or can at least observe them, then you may be able to obtain an oracle via hippomancy today. This form of divination is based on interpreting a horse's movements and sounds. Numerous methods exist. An ancient Slavic technique involves leading a horse through three gates. It was considered inauspicious if the horse did not lead with the right foot each time. But there's no textbook on hippomancy: experiment until you're satisfied you've received an answer to your query.

Spirits of the Day

EPONA

Today is the Eponalia—the festival of the goddess Epona, a Roman festival honoring a Celtic deity. Epona's name derives from *epos*, a Celtic word meaning “horse.” Epona is never portrayed without at least one. She is a guardian of horses and their riders, and especially soldiers, but her powers also encompass healing, death, and prosperity. On this day, beasts of burden, not only horses—donkeys, mules, cattle, and oxen—were given a day of rest from their labors. By extension, perhaps, those born in the years of the horse or ox or with Taurus prominent in their astrological charts should consider this a vacation day.

Epona is the guardian of those who care for horses, work with them, or just love them. She may be invoked for protection of horse and rider, as well as for any kind of healing. Epona is envisioned as a mare, a mare-headed woman, or a woman riding a horse and possibly surrounded by others. Her image is placed within stables to guard their inhabitants. Her symbols include a key and a

cornucopia, or a basket filled with fruit. Offerings on behalf of horses are appropriate, while she also accepts roses, cake, or fruit.

RHIANNON

Horses were once widely perceived as magical animals, subject to veneration throughout ancient Europe, but especially in the British Isles, where vestiges survive in the aversion to eating horse flesh and at archaeological sites like the White Horse of Uffington, a prehistoric figure created by filling stylized trenches with white chalk. Numerous horse spirits exist, but most are now mysterious, their myths lost to time or suppression.

Rhiannon, a Welsh horse spirit, is a more famous goddess than Epona, because Fleetwood Mac's hit song "Rhiannon" brought her to the forefront. Because of their shared associations with horses, many speculate that Rhiannon and Epona are two names for the same sacred being, although this is subject to debate. Those that consider this true may venerate Rhiannon today. Others who love this mysterious goddess may also do so, as she has no other known specific feast date. Rhiannon is an increasingly popular Neo-Pagan goddess, associated with love, romance, and happiness. Offer her images of horses.

THE YULE LADS

Tonight marks the appearance of the seventh Yule Lad as Hurðaskellir (Door Slammer) sneaks into homes. He likes to slam doors hard and unexpectedly, especially at night, when people are sleeping. He will remain until December 31. For more information regarding the Yule Lads, see [December 12](#).



December 19

The Saturnalia continues: masters and slaves once exchanged roles today as part

of the festivities. It's not all fun and games, however: the knowledge that this day was coming may have curbed some abuses during the year. Role reversals between parents and children, teachers and students, bosses and employees may also be done today.

The Opalia or the Feast of Ops

Ops is the goddess of peace, plenty, prosperity, and most especially *opulence*. She is Saturn's Roman consort, and her festival—the Opalia or the Feast of Ops—is part of Saturnalia celebrations. Ops is invoked for the good life but was also called upon to protect against harmful fires. Her name is also etymologically related to “opus” or work, as in your *magnum opus*. Request her assistance as needed. She may be invoked for assistance with careers. As Ops is a chthonic or underground goddess, she is best invoked while sitting on the ground with hands touching Earth.

The Yule Lads

Tonight marks the arrival of the eighth Yule Lad, Skyrgamur (Skyr Gobbler). He sneaks into homes in order to eat up all their skyr (Icelandic yogurt, now available internationally). He lingers until January 1. Please see [December 12](#) for more information about these trolls.

December 20

Today may be the solstice, but if not, it will be near the date.

Saint Thomas Eve

Thomas is among those saints who behave more magically than a respectable Christian saint should. Tomorrow is his feast, and so tonight is his eve. It's considered among the most magically powerful nights of the year, suitable for any kind of divination or spellcasting. It's likely that this is because of the proximity to the solstice, but it's earned Thomas a reputation as one of the

magical saints. For further details on Thomas, please see [July 3](#).

Central European folk traditions suggest that Thomas rides out tonight in a fiery chariot, accompanied by an entourage of spirits. His destination is the cemetery, where he calls out for all residents named Thomas to rise. Because of the tradition of naming children after the saint whose feast coincides with their birthday, it's likely to be the night before the birthdays of many of these dead Thomases. (See [Glossary entry](#) for Name Day.) Thomas blesses his name children. They return to the grave, while he rides on to other cemeteries to repeat the ritual.

Allegedly, if you hear the sound of his chariot passing by, call out to Thomas. In response, he'll bless you with good health, longevity, and protection.

The Yule Lads

Tonight marks the arrival of the ninth Yule Lad, Bjúgnakrækir (Sausage Snatcher), who sneaks into homes to do exactly what his name promises. He will remain until January 2. Please see [December 12](#) for more information regarding these trolls.

December 21

Today may coincide with the solstice, but if not, it will be very close. Folk custom recommends giving to the poor on Old Saint Thomas Day, whether directly or through charitable donations, in order to be blessed with good luck and prosperity yourself.

Saint and Spirits of the Day

OLD SAINT THOMAS DAY

According to the Western Church, today is the old feast of Saint Thomas, frequently coinciding with the solstice. Perhaps to minimize magical associations, this feast was eventually changed to [July 3](#) (see that date for details). Many perceive the December feast as the most magical of his feasts because it's the original and because of its proximity to Christmas, but devotees often celebrate both.

THE YULE LADS

Tonight marks the arrival of the tenth Yule Lad. Gluggagægir (Window Peeper) sneaks down from their mountain stronghold to peep into windows seeking things to steal. Today's kinder, gentler troll is probably only hoping for snacks, but in the bad old days that snack may have been children. He remains until January 3. Please see [December 12](#) for more information on these Christmas trolls.

December 22

This day was once widely considered an unlucky or inauspicious day (see the [Glossary entry](#) for the Egyptian Days for more information).

Saints and Spirits of the Day

ANASTASIA

Saint Anastasia bears the title “Deliverer from Potions,” indicating her magical ability to break curses and overturn any type of malevolent witchcraft or magic. Her symbol is a flask, which has been interpreted as indicating her power over potions. The Eastern Church, where her veneration originated, still considers her among the great saints. Anastasia is the special guardian of widows but may be invoked to remove hexes by anyone in need. Today is her feast, the time to honor her and seek her help.

THE YULE LADS

Tonight marks the appearance of the eleventh Yule Lad, Gáttaþefur (Doorway Sniffer). He stands in doorways where his heightened sense of smell helps him find *laufabrauð* (leaf bread or lace bread), an Icelandic Christmas treat. He will depart on January 4. Please see [December 12](#) for details regarding these mischievous Christmas trolls.



December 23

The Saturnalia concludes today, while in some places tonight, the night before the night before Christmas, is celebrated as Little Christmas Eve. In Denmark, rice pudding is traditionally on the menu tonight. Large batches are made so that some can be given to the *julenissen* (see [below](#)) and some more put away for tomorrow's *risalamande*, a Danish Christmas specialty.

Festivus

Not everyone loves the lengthy countdown to Christmas, but it can be hard to avoid. Christmas songs are ubiquitous. Aggressive advertising for Christmas gifts and goods sometimes begins before Halloween. For those who do not celebrate Christmas, this can be an overwhelming time of year. Festivus, a holiday for the rest of us, is a seasonal celebration, observed with feats of strength and the airing of grievances. The iconic symbol of Festivus is an unadorned, undecorated pole.

Festivus entered public consciousness through the *Seinfeld* episode, "The Strike," written by Dan O'Keefe, which first aired on December 18, 1997. In the TV show, the holiday is invented by George Costanza's father, but in real life it was created by O'Keefe's dad, author and editor Daniel O'Keefe, as a secular holiday, unburdened by religion and commercialism. Although the O'Keefe's holiday had no set date, Festivus resonated with its audience and is now generally celebrated tonight. Ironically, Festivus poles are now merchandised and easily available for purchase. More information can be found at FestivusWeb.com.

The Larentalia

This Roman feast honors the goddess Acca Larentia and the household guardians known as the Lares. It is a festival of gratitude toward benefactors and the benevolent dead, and these themes may be incorporated into modern practices such as celebrating ancestors today.



Saint and Spirits of the Day

ACCA LARENTIA

Numerous origin stories are offered for the now mysterious goddess Acca Larentia, a deified woman and benefactor of Rome, who is honored today. Although other details diverge dramatically, the consistent outcome of these stories is that Rome receives her fortune. Today is the anniversary of her funeral. The Larentalia, her feast, was celebrated with funeral rites. Acca Larentia is petitioned for prosperity. Those with close ties to Rome may seek her protection. She may or may not also be the goddess Lara, mother of the Lares, who share today's feast. (See [February 21](#).) Acca Larentia is the guardian of sex workers, financially independent women, and urban gardeners. Gardens, especially practical herb or vegetable allotments, in or near cities are her sacred space. The Nine of Pentacles Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot card may be used to represent her.

THE LARES

The name *Lares*, pronounced LAH-res, is plural, as there are always two of them. (One is a *lar*.) Today is their annual feast, although during the Roman era they would also have been honored daily, encouraged to maintain a watchful eye over a family's fortunes. The Lares are household spirits who guard families, their homes, property, and everything associated with them. Always helpful and never harmful, at least toward the family they protect, they may possibly be Etruscan in origin.

At one time, virtually every Roman home had at least one shrine for the Lares, known as a *lararium*, often positioned near the hearth, although wealthier families sometimes maintained multiple altars. The Lares are also enshrined at crossroads from where they can see danger approaching from any direction. They may manifest as crowned snakes or as young men accompanied by a dog. Traditional offerings for them include incense, salt, wine or milk, and a flame in the form of a candle or oil lamp.

NISSEN

The *Nissen* are Scandinavian household spirits who may also be land spirits who've moved indoors. Sometimes translated as "elves" or "goblins," *nissen* is plural; the singular form is *nisse*. Various names for them exist, varying by region. Another name is *tomte*. Despite their great modern popularity, their origins are ancient and mysterious.

They serve as guardians of families, protecting against all harm. They may also perform chores and favors and may become very attached to individual members of a household including animals, especially cats and horses. *Nissen* are sensitive, temperamental creatures who are easily offended by small acts perceived as disrespectful. If angered, they can turn on a family, playing tricks, stealing or hiding items, or worse. Luckily, they can be mollified with gifts, especially food. They are fond of dairy products like butter, as well as porridge.

The *nisse* is envisioned as being similar in appearance to a garden gnome. Some are small enough to ride a cat, although others are the size of a child, perhaps three or four feet tall. They are typically portrayed wearing brightly colored conical hats. Ancient Pagan spirits, following Scandinavia's conversion to Christianity, interaction with *nissen* was severely discouraged. Ironically, since the 1840s, these Scandinavian spirits have become closely identified with solstice and Christmas traditions. Their images grace holiday cards, and the *julenisse* (Christmas *nisse*) has even emerged as a gift-giver, who goes door to door delivering presents, accompanied by the Yule goat (*Julbocken*).

To keep the *julenissen* happy, bowls of rice pudding are placed on rooftops tonight to fortify them as they get ready for their annual deliveries. A household's *nisse* shares the family's Yule bounty and is given a bowl of porridge or another treat on Christmas.

SAINT THORLAC

Thorlac, the ascetic bishop of Skalholt, died on this day in 1193. He is to Iceland as Patrick is to Ireland, although he was not canonized until 1984 when Pope John Paul II declared him the patron saint of Iceland. In recent years Thorlac has developed a reputation as a guardian of the autistic, especially skilled at relieving anxiety and agitation. Thorlac's Mass, an Icelandic holiday celebrated today, has evolved into a part of Christmas festivities. It's customary to dine on fish today, especially traditional fermented or cured skate, accompanied by potatoes.

THE YULE LADS

Tonight marks the arrival of the twelfth Yule Lad. Ketkrókur (Meat Hook) uses a hook to steal meat. Modern tales describe him sticking a forked stick down chimneys in hopes of snagging meat placed in the hearth to smoke or cook for Christmas dinner, although back in the old days he may have been seeking children instead. His arrival coincides with Thorlac's feast, traditionally celebrated by dining on skate fish. Meat for Christmas dinner, left unattended in the hearth, may be especially vulnerable to Ketkrókur's wiles. He remains a danger until January 5. Please see [December 12](#) for more information on these Icelandic spirits.



December 24

Entire books are written about Christmas traditions. What follows is only a sampling with emphasis on the magical. Although it may sound paradoxical, Christmas Eve is counted among the prime witching nights, an ideal time for divination, spellcasting, and ritual foods.

The energy in the air tonight—starting at dusk and continuing past midnight to tomorrow's dawn—is considered exceptional for crafting amulets, talismans, poppets, and charm bags. Those not celebrating Christmas may choose to channel all the evening's anticipatory energy into power items. But for those with Christmas Eve plans or family obligations, this may be challenging. Imagine the challenges faced during the era of witch-hunting, the Inquisition, and mandatory church attendance. And yet many once forbidden amulets were secretly created, despite great risks. A prime example is the Germanic *nothemd*, a prized talismanic shirt popular during the Thirty Years War that allegedly granted safety in battle and childbirth, and served as a money magnet, too. The entire shirt had to be completed during the hours of darkness on Christmas Eve, from spinning the thread to sewing and embellishments, even though this was strictly forbidden. To be effective, the *nothemd* could only be created by a young virgin woman. The wealthy paid large sums for these amulets, crafted while they attended church and Christmas Eve dinners. Should the young woman be caught

and punished, the customer could deny all knowledge.

Christmas Eve

Various folk traditions consider Christmas Eve a witching night in the same manner as Halloween or Midsummers. Witches are believed to be at the peak of their power. They fly out tonight, looking for fun and mischief in the company of familiar spirits. In some Scandinavian traditions, brooms were hidden away on this day so that the witches couldn't ride. Witches reputedly congregate at crossroads tonight. Folk traditions recommend against venturing near them tonight, lest you run into the witches or be mistaken for one. Witches, however, might consider arranging crossroads parties or rituals. There are many magical reasons for visiting crossroads, including the presence of spirits, especially the Wild Hunt, who ride tonight. (Check the [Glossary](#) for details.) On Christmas Eve, even the Wild Hunt distributes gifts.



WILD HUNT MONEY SPELL

1. Fast all day today.
2. After nightfall, go to a crossroads to wait patiently for the Wild Hunt to pass by.
3. Allegedly, if you stand quietly, respectfully, and calmly as they pass, the last Wild Hunter will distribute coins.
4. Keep this coin with you always as a lucky talisman with which to build a fortune.

CHRISTMAS EVE ORACLE

This bit of German folk magic uses onions to help you make a choice. The process may be lengthy, however, so this is for choices you've been pondering, not those needing instant solutions. It may be helpful if you're considering different paths of action in the new year. The onions *must* be gathered tonight and not from those already in your pantry. They must be obtained after nightfall on today's date.

1. Consider your choices. You will need one onion to represent each one. If desired, add an extra onion to represent an unknown solution, one you haven't thought of yet. Do not peel or chop the onions but leave them whole.
2. Place each onion atop its own small plate.
3. In concise language, write each of your possible choices on its own piece of paper and place this beneath the onion or the plate.
4. Spend time with these onions, focusing on your dilemma and the possible outcomes. (Allegedly, weeping enhances the process.)
5. Leave the onions out overnight.
6. Some recommend transplanting each onion together with its paper into a flowerpot filled with dirt on Christmas Day, making sure to identify which onion is which, perhaps by marking the pot. The first onion to sprout determines the answer to your question.

By burying the onion, the green sprout mimics resurrection. For those who find this uncomfortable or who seek an oracle without spiritual overtones, just leave onions on their plates without burying them. This also speeds up the process, as any green shoots are instantly visible.



MOTHERS NIGHT

The Venerable Bede identified this popular Anglo-Saxon Pagan holiday with Yule, and so many celebrate this holiday tonight. For details, see the entry for the Winter Solstice in “[Appendix 2: Moveable Feasts](#).”

RÉVEILLON

Réveillon literally means “awakening” in French but also refers to the tradition in France, and those places historically influenced by France, of luxurious dinners. There are two Réveillon dinners in December, one associated with Christmas, the other with New Year’s Eve, but in modern New Orleans and elsewhere, Réveillon now names a season, which may last the length of December or from Christmas Eve to New Year’s Day, with restaurants featuring deluxe Réveillon menus.

For Catholics, December 24 was once devoted to fasting and abstinence. The original Christmas Réveillon dinner intended to break this fast was held after returning from Midnight Mass. Technically, this may be December 25, but even if eaten then, dinner is prepared and arranged today. Serve and enjoy the most luxurious foods and beverages possible. Oysters and champagne are favorites, as are lavish deserts.

YULE LOG

Burning a log on Christmas Eve is an ancient tradition deriving from pre-Christian European sources that are so widespread, it's impossible to determine where they began. Before this magical log was associated with Yule, it may have been part of Anglo-Saxon Mothers Night rituals or seasonal ritual bonfires. Goddesses like Diana and Hera were once venerated in the form of logs. But the sacred properties of logs are as modern as they are ancient, as demonstrated by the Log Lady of *Twin Peaks* and the magical log she cradles. Meanwhile, Norse goddess Frigga retains strong associations with Yule logs.

The modern Yule log is now typically a standard fireplace log, but huge blocks of wood expected to burn for twelve days were once the norm. In some regions, the log was not burned completely but removed from the fire so that a piece could be preserved, believed to bestow enhanced health and prosperity. As it's believed to radiate fertility power, those wishing for children should sit with it as it burns, minds focused on goals and desires. Keep whatever's left of it, even charred ashes, under beds, as it's believed to repel vermin.

Although many associate Yule logs exclusively with Christmas Eve, modern Pagans have transferred—or returned—the custom to solstice celebrations.

The remains of the Yule log are believed to prevent unwanted fires. Preserve it all year and then, when it's time, use it to help light a new Yule log. Once this is done, anything left of last year's log is ground up and sprinkled around the perimeter of a home for added protection, or kept in a charm bag.

Spirits of the Night

KALLIKANTZAROI

In Greek tradition, tonight begins the *Dodecameron* or Twelve Nights of Christmas, culminating on January 6. Some count from Christmas Day, tomorrow, but the Kallikantzaroi, sometimes described as “Greek goblins,” are nocturnal, and this is their season, as they are only able to run free during this time. Their name is believed to derive from *Kalos Kentauros* meaning “beautiful centaur,” and they resemble wild, rambunctious centaurs of Greek myth, but not exactly. Horned goat-men, the Kallikantzaroi possess sharp fangs and talons. Their true identity is unknown. They may be a distinct species of spirit. They may be descendants of those old centaurs or some sort of evolution. They may also once have been men, cursed to become Kallikantzaroi after death, perhaps because, as with some Balkan beliefs about werewolves, they were born on Christmas day.

Held captive underground during the rest of the year—although escapes are attempted—they are released to run rampant through our world for these twelve nights. Light hurts their eyes—they’re not used to it—and so they sneak into dark places and hide during the day: in caves, businesses shuttered for the holidays, maybe even your basement. They don’t restrict themselves to the countryside but vandalize urban areas, too. Unlike the Yule Lads, who emerge one at a time, the Kallikantzaroi roam as gangs, breaking into shops and homes, vandalizing them, and stealing liquor and Christmas dinners. They stand accused of kidnappings and assault. Reputedly, they’ll eat people, too. Also, unlike the Yule Lads, their reputation has not softened over time. They do not bring gifts to children but are as chaotic and menacing as ever. Despite this, offerings or bribes are made to them, anytime during these twelve nights, but especially the last one, perhaps indicating vestigial veneration. They love cooked food, as they so rarely get it, especially meat, especially pork. Place gifts outside on chimney ledges or doorsteps; never invite the Kallikantzaroi inside.

THE YULE LADS

The last of these Christmas trolls appears tonight, the thirteenth. Kertasníkir (Candle Stealer) stalks children, hoping to steal their Christmas candles, as their light is his snack. Once rare and treasured, candles were commonly made from tallow and thus edible. Kertasníkir remains until January 6. Please see [December 12](#) for more information regarding these Icelandic spirits.

December 25

Christmas celebrates the birthday of Jesus Christ. For historians, this is controversial, as there is no documentation that this is indeed his birthday. The Gospels do not provide concrete information. Various arguments are made for different dates. The earliest known documentation of December 25 being celebrated as Christ's birthday is from 336, approximately three centuries after the Crucifixion. Several years later, Pope Julius I decreed that Christ's birth would be celebrated on this date.

It is believed that those born today possess the gift of speaking with animals or at least understanding them. Another folk belief asserts that those born today cannot see spirits, although whether they can hear or otherwise perceive them is not mentioned. Various superstitions also suggest that those born today are prone to becoming vampires or werewolves. This is based on regional Christian superstitions, which perceived sharing a birthday with Jesus as signifying the utmost arrogance.

Although today is Christmas day, the first of the Twelve Days of Christmas is celebrated tomorrow. Please see the entry for [December 26](#) for further details.

Christmas Greenery Dream Pillow

Save some botanical Christmas decorations to incorporate within a dream pillow, believed to induce romantic dreams. Combine holly, ivy, mistletoe, and dried evergreen needles together with dried, powdered mugwort. Add a couple of bay leaves, too. If you like the scent, add one drop of essential oil of fir, spruce, or pine, but if you do so, be sure the botanical material is completely dry before sewing it within the pillow. It's not necessary for the greenery to have been used as Christmas decorations. If you don't decorate for Christmas, you may still benefit from the bounty of plants available at this time. (Be cautious with mistletoe, as it's potentially toxic.)

Sew the botanical material within a muslin bag, then cover this with a

secondary bag. (This enables you to clean the outer bag without destroying the pillow.) Use flannel or silk or some other smooth material that won't disrupt your sleep. Several of these plants are spiky or pointy—trim the points or otherwise make sure that they don't poke you while you sleep.

If you eat panettone today, the Italian Christmas cake, freeze or save a slice to be eaten on February 3, the Feast of Saint Blaise. Doing this allegedly prevents sore throats for the rest of the year.

Iceland's Christmas Cat

The Yule Cat (*Jólakötturinn*) or Christmas Cat lives with trollkvinna Gryla in Iceland's mountains. This giant feline descends from the mountains on Christmas Day in order to inspect homes and hunt for victims. Unlike the Yule Lads who have mellowed with time, the Yule Cat remains a horror. Legend has it that the cat will devour all those not wearing new Christmas clothes. The impoverished, unable to afford anything new, and children, dependent on the generosity of adults, are especially at risk.

No need for an entirely new outfit—a new pair of shoes, a scarf, apron, or mittens keep the Yule Cat at bay. Some place offerings for the cat outside their homes, which the cat eats while peering in windows, inspecting the household's fashions. Those offerings hint at some sort of reverence or spiritual appeasement in the distant past, even if now forgotten.

December 26

Kwanzaa

This holiday's name derives from a Swahili phrase "*matunda ya kwanzaa*," meaning "first fruits." Introduced in 1966 by Professor Maulana Karenga, then Chairman of Black Studies at California State University Long Beach, this celebration of African heritage is based on elements of African harvest festivals.

The holiday lasts for seven days with each day focused on one of seven core principles (*Nguzo Saba*). Each principle is represented by a candle placed within a kinara, a seven-branched candleholder (*kinara* literally means “candleholder” in Swahili), as well as seven symbols, all placed atop a mat or *mkeka*, usually made from straw, and representing the foundation of African history and traditions. The symbolic colors of Kwanzaa and its candles are red, black, and green, the colors of the Pan-African flag, also known as the Marcus Garvey flag, first displayed in 1920.

A new candle is lit on each of Kwanzaa’s seven days. One black candle stands at the center of the kinara, flanked by three green and three red ones. Celebrated at home and in communities, Kwanzaa culminates with Kwanzaa Karamu, a joyous feast, on the penultimate day, December 31. Today is the first day of Kwanzaa, and the principle is Umoja or unity. The black candle is lit. It is a time to discuss family and community issues.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Although for many Christmas is a one-day event, traditionally it’s been celebrated for twelve, concluding on Twelfth Night. (Please see the entry for [January 5](#).) The Twelve Days of Christmas that begin immediately after Christmas Day may be considered intercalary days—liminal time—and thus a time of great power, beneficial for any kind of spiritual interaction, divination, and spellcasting. Today is the first of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

The Omen Days

In Brittany and Wales, the days corresponding to the Twelve Days of Christmas are also known as the Omen Days. Because of their liminal nature, these twelve days are believed to provide omens for the new year to come. Each day corresponds to the month of the same number. Thus, today, the first Omen Day, is the day to receive harbingers of one’s fate in January. Tomorrow, the second Omen Day, brings tidings of February, and so forth.

Traditionally, omens are not so much sought as expected to arrive. Pay attention to surroundings or events of the day in anticipation of an omen. How goes the day will go the month. It is traditional to spend time outdoors, so that omens may more easily come to you in the form of appearances of unexpected animals or birds. In other words, your dog appearing in the kitchen for breakfast,

as he does every morning, is not likely to be an omen, unless something unusual occurs today. A deer in your backyard, however, could be interpreted as an omen. Overhearing significant words from strangers also serves as an omen. Turn on the radio and pay attention to the first words you hear.

Seeking an omen may be done passively or actively. In other words, you can wait for an omen to come to you or you can actively analyze markings on a tree or the chattering of birds. Although not traditional, you may also actively seek omens by drawing a Tarot or oracle card, picking a rune, or casting charms. Write down omens received, as you will likely wish to revisit them in the year to come. Should the forecast seem foreboding or unhappy, magical means may be taken to change your fate. These omens give you fair warning.

December 27

The Omen Days

Today, the second of the Omen Days, provides an omen for February, the second month of the year. Remember, an omen of a future event gives you time to take action. If the forecast seems foreboding or unhappy, magical means may be taken to change your fate. Please see [December 26](#) for more information on the Omen Days.

Saint of the Day

SAINT JOHN

Today's Saint John is not the Baptist but the Apostle, the only one said to die a natural death. Also known as John the Divine, John of Patmos, John the Evangelist, and John the Revelator, he is credited with writing the *Gospel of John* and the *Book of Revelation*, although some historians express doubts. According to legend, John survived after drinking from a poisoned chalice and, in his honor, his feast is often celebrated with drinking games and traditions. Perhaps coincidentally, the Haloa, a Greek festival honoring Dionysus, Lord of Wine, was held annually around this time, too, although its date was determined by the lunar calendar. Allegedly raising a glass of wine in John's honor today promotes the health of the drinker and provides safety from lightning. Teetotalers may substitute grape juice. Wine blessed in churches today was

saved, as it was considered to possess medicinal powers.

While alive, John had a formidable reputation as an exorcist and a healer. As a saint, he maintains this reputation. John is the patron saint of authors, publishers, alchemists, oil blenders, and artists. According to Ethiopian tradition, John invented the tradition of amuletic paintings—artwork possessing miraculous healing powers.



December 28

National Card Playing Day

The first evidence of cards in a recognizable form and intended for games derives from ninth-century China. Cards are now enjoyed worldwide with games, gambling, and divination as their primary uses, although they are also incorporated into magic spells. Games are the stated purpose of today's holiday, but that may be because of mainstream reluctance to promote gambling or the occult. It is an ideal time to celebrate cards and expand one's knowledge of them, whether by learning new games or by learning to read them. This is not mutually exclusive. The hand of cards held by a gambler may be interpreted before it is played. Among the earliest uses of Tarot cards were in Italian card games, such as tarokk.

PLAYING CARD GOOD LUCK SPELL

This spell allegedly stimulates good luck in a chosen endeavor. It may be done at any time, but now, so close to New Year's Eve, allows you to coordinate with New Year's resolutions and perhaps refine them. Consider what you wish to achieve in the New Year.

1. Remove the aces from a brand-new deck of cards. Any deck may be used,

whether Tarot or playing cards, providing there are four aces.

2. Place the cards face-up on a plate or shallow dish and cover them with breadcrumbs while focusing on your vision of success.
3. Now cover this with sugar.
4. Place seven coins atop the sugar, as well as something representing your goal, whether a charm, a photo, or even a written affirmation.
5. Place a small white, gold, silver, or red candle on top and burn.
6. Once the candle has burned down, dispose of the breadcrumbs and sugar outside—it's auspicious if birds eat them. Cards, coins, and wax remnants may be placed in a charm bag and preserved.

The Omen Days

Today is the third Omen Day, time to seek an omen for March, the third month. Please see [December 26](#) for more information about the Omen Days.

Spirits of the Day

THE MARASSA

These powerful Vodou lwa appear in the guise of twins and often in the form of children. Their name derives from *Mabasa*, a Kikongo word translated as “the one who comes as two” or “those who come divided.” Although they may appear as children, they are ancient. Although they are twins, there may be three of them. The Marassa rule thresholds, divides, paradoxes, and contradictions, which they embody and resolve. Great healers and providers of fertility, they are also guardians of children, as well as places and businesses that bring joy to children, such as candy shops, ice cream parlors, and toy stores. If you have such a business, set up an offering table for them on the premises, allowing them to sample the wares in exchange for their gifts of success and protection. Communicate with them frequently and request their assistance, as although benevolent, they bore easily and are sometimes rambunctious in the manner of energetic children.

While their offerings reflect children's tastes, never treat the Marassa as children, lest you anger them. Attempts to “parent” them or offering what's “good for them” signal disrespect. In other words, give them candy and toys that

bring joy, not vitamins or vegetables, even if not what you would normally give children. No need for “educational toys”—the Marassa already know *everything*. Celebrate them with fun and games in the guise of children’s parties. Invite children to celebrate, too. The Marassa gravitate and react to the presence of children. If children are happy and well treated, the Marassa are pleased. Their anger is roused when children are neglected, unappreciated, exploited, or abused.

Today, their sacred day, coincides with the Roman Catholic feast of the Holy Innocents. Focus is on the protection and well-being of living children, commemoration and celebration of deceased children, and providing solace to families who have lost children. The Marassa may be female, male, or a combination. They are identified with Saints Cosmos and Damian, the Marys of the Sea, and Faith, Hope, and Charity, as well as Pagan trios such as the Charities and Graces.



December 29

The Omen Days

Today is the fourth of the Omen Days, time to seek an omen for April, the fourth month. For more information on the Omen Days, please see [December 26](#).

Ninety Cats Protection Spell

On this day in 1610, Countess Erzsebet Bathory was placed under house arrest at Cachtice Castle, now in modern Slovakia, but then part of the kingdom of

Hungary. The day before her arrest, Bathory had lost her favorite spell—an incantation—or at least so claimed the local Lutheran pastor who feared and despised her. (Virtually all information regarding Countess Bathory was obtained either via torture or from those who benefited from her disgrace.) It's unclear exactly what she lost but, as a result, Bathory visited Erzsi Majorova, typically described as a “forest witch,” from whom she allegedly obtained the following spell. Various translations and versions are available. This is my own translation and adaptation.

Hungarian folklore associates cats with magic and witchcraft. In pre-Christian Hungarian cosmology, the clouds, which float over everyone, are a source of divinity. If casting the spell for yourself, insert your own full name rather than referring to yourself as “me.” Visualize an army of fierce cats from all over the globe converging together to serve as your bodyguards and chant the following as needed.

Help me, Clouds!

Clouds stay with me!

Don't let any harm come to [insert name]. Let [insert name] remain strong and invincible.

Power clouds! Send me ninety cats!

I command you, King of the Cats, I beseech you:

Gather together, whether you are in the mountains or the waters, on the roofs or on the other side of the ocean.

May these ninety cats come to lacerate and destroy the hearts of my enemy/enemies [insert names] so that they cannot harm [insert name].

King of Cats protect [insert name].



December 30

Today is the penultimate day of the calendar year. Check to make sure that you have whatever you need for December 31 and January 1.

The Omen Days

Today, the fifth of the Omen Days, is the time to seek an omen for May, the fifth month. Please see [December 26](#) for more information on the Omen Days.

Saint and Spirit of the Day

MADAME DEATH

Watch the clock! Be prepared for the moment that December 30 ends and December 31 begins. It's time to appease Madame Death in hopes that she will not visit your household in the new year. This Madame Death is not Santa Muerte. Instead, it's her Central European sister spirit. This pre-Christian spirit survived post-Christianity in the form of a terrifying specter. Madame Death perches in pear trees, which are bare at this time of year in her homeland.

1. The traditional formula to ward her off is to create a broth by simmering pears, preferably wild pears.
2. Pour this pear broth over the thresholds of your home at exactly midnight, the threshold of the last day of the year.
3. If you don't have fresh pears, create the broth with dried pears. Alternatively, see whether Madame Death is satisfied with pear liquor like Poire Williams or pear-flavored vodka.

Saint or Spirit of the Day

GRIGORI RASPUTIN

On this day in 1916, Grigori Rasputin, healer, clairvoyant, and advisor to Alexandra, Tsarina of Russia, was murdered. Although frequently called "the mad monk," he was neither ordained nor insane. He was a *staretz*—a wandering holy man. Since his death, Rasputin has been credited with miracles of healing and rescues, especially from traffic accidents. He remains controversial, as he was while alive. Now venerated as a folk saint, he is sometimes portrayed on icons together with the royal family he served. Some consider this blasphemous. Others prefer to venerate Rasputin alone, perceiving that his power to effect miracle cures survives in death.

Offer him candles, incense, and flattery. Rasputin liked alcohol and

traditional Russian food but maintained a very strict diet that he felt enhanced his spiritual powers. He ate no meat and no sugar, so do not offer pastry or candy if you'd like him to be at his most effective. He stopped smoking when he became a staretz. In life, Rasputin collected icons, and they remain an appropriate offering for him.

December 31

Today is the last day of the old year with 11:59 pm the last minute. Conclude old business today and prepare for the New Year. It's traditional to stay up to see the old year out and greet the new one. Midnight, the threshold between the two, is usually somehow indicated, typically on a grand scale, whether with fireworks, the ringing of bells, or the dropping of a huge, glittering ball in Times Square. Older traditions recommend banging pots and pans at midnight, not just for fun or to make sure everyone is alerted to the new year: the sound of clattering metal is believed to drive away lingering malicious spirits. The clinking of champagne glasses isn't enough. It must be metal, preferably iron or steel.

As it's widely believed that nothing should leave the house on New Year's Day, anything that must be removed, including garbage, should be taken out today.

New Year's Eve

HAPPY SURPRISE NEW YEAR MONEY SPELL

The first stage of this spell must be cast *before* midnight on New Year's Eve. The reputed effect of the spell is that it stimulates receipt of unexpected money from happy sources in the forthcoming year.

1. Place some money in a container and bury it. You choose the amount, but be aware that you will no longer be able to spend this money—it must be donated to charity—so choose an amount that is comfortable for you. It must be actual currency, not fake money like Monopoly money. Nor can it be currency that is no longer usable. Bury coins or a dollar bill or more. Use a Ziploc plastic bag or a lidded glass jar as containers. If you lack access to a backyard, bury the money in a flowerpot filled with soil.

2. Tomorrow, January 1, dig up the money. This must be done before midnight, before this first day of the year ends. This money *must* be donated to the less fortunate or to charity.

MAGICAL NEW YEAR'S EVE TRADITIONS

Numerous rituals from around the world exist with the goal of ensuring a happy new year. Since the rise of the internet, these have spread around the globe. Here is a sampling:

- Prepare lentils in advance, so that you can eat a mouthful at midnight. This tradition, possibly derived from Roman roots, is believed to encourage a prosperous New Year.
- Toss a glassful of water out the window or door to ensure that you'll cry fewer tears in the new year to come. (Look outside first to make sure it can be done safely.)
- Place a penny or other coin on your outside windowsill before midnight. Bring it inside on New Year's Day and reputedly you will never lack money in the year to come.
- A Greek tradition recommends playing card games during the hours leading up to the New Year. Other games can substitute, providing that there are clear winners. Whoever wins tonight is expected to have good luck all year long. Multiple short games enable more participants to win, as opposed to one long game like Monopoly.
- It's also recommended that the first thing eaten in the New Year be sweet to ensure sweetness in the coming year. Break a pomegranate on the threshold, so that blessings will be as plentiful as the seeds.
- If you hope to travel in the new year, roll an empty suitcase around the block. The suitcase must be empty. Some believe this ritual must be done at midnight, but others suggest that it can be done anytime today.
- Place a sprig of holly, ivy, or mistletoe or a combination of them in a small charm bag. Place it beneath your pillow to dream of your true love.

UNDERWEAR LUCK

Throughout Latin America, the color of the underwear you're wearing on New Year's Eve is believed to affect your luck in the year to come.

- Wear bright green underwear for a year of improved health.
- Wear bright purple underwear for a year of empowerment and success.
- Wear bright red underwear for a year of improved romance.
- Wear bright yellow underwear for a year of improved finances.

TWELVE GRAPES AT MIDNIGHT

At midnight, eat twelve grapes, each one symbolizing good luck for one month of the year. Variations on this old Spanish tradition exist:

- The entire process must be accomplished in complete silence from the beginning until the last grape has been consumed.
- Alternatively, intone the name of each month as you down a grape. (January—eat a grape; February—eat a grape; and so forth.)
- Eat twelve *green* grapes, ensuring financial luck all year long. This step can be combined with either of the two previous ones.

TWELVE CANDLES LUCK SPELL

This old tradition requires that you exercise caution.

Lay twelve lit candles in a row and leap over each one to ensure twelve months of good fortune. As with the grapes, this may be performed silently, or you may intone the name of each consecutive month as you leap over each candle. Be aware of fire safety, as injuring yourself or burning your home down is no way to start the new year.

ASHES DIVINATION

If you have a working fireplace and lit a fire tonight, make sure it's completely out before going to bed, not only for fire safety but for purposes of divination, too. Carefully spread the ashes so that they are smooth and then check them first thing upon arising. Shapes that have emerged in the ashes overnight are interpreted as signs indicating what to expect in the year ahead.

The Omen Days

Today is the sixth of the Omen Days. Don't let New Year's Eve plans distract you from seeking or receiving an omen for June, the sixth month. For more

information on the Omen Days, please see [December 26](#).

Réveillon

In France, as well as regions historically influenced by France, tonight is Réveillon, a lengthy and luxurious dinner. See [December 24](#) for details. Food and beverages consumed are as luxurious as possible: for example, oysters, champagne, and lavish deserts.

Spirits of the Day

FATHER FROST AND THE SNOW MAIDEN

On December 31, Morozko or Ded Moroz (the names are used interchangeably), Russia's Father Frost, delivers gifts to children, accompanied by Snegorochka the Snow Maiden, his granddaughter. Her mother is the Snow Queen. This is a modern tradition, rooted in Soviet suppression of religion, but the spirits are old.

Ded Moroz and Snegorochka are ancient Russian folkloric spirits; no religious overtones are associated with them. They bring gifts to all.

Morozko is responsible for ferocious Russian winters. In centuries past, before his rebirth as a Santa Claus-like figure, he was petitioned either for snow or safety from it. Whatever Ded Moroz touches with his staff immediately freezes. That staff is his constant companion and his distinguishing characteristic. Old fairytales describe it as made from ice and resembling a magician's wand; modern retelling suggest that it's crystal or silver and ever-present because Ded Moroz is old and needs a cane.

Snegorochka's origins are murkier than her grandfather's. Originally a winter spirit in his entourage, she has since been conflated with the title character of "The Snow Child," a nineteenth-century Russian fairytale in which a childless Russian couple form a magical child from snow who then comes to life.

Snegorochka, pretty and friendly, helps Morozko distribute gifts but also serves as a mediator for those, especially young children, who are intimidated by him. In Russia, people dress as the pair, just as elsewhere people dress as Santa, Saint Nick, and Krampus. Dolls, figurines, and other images are available internationally. Those who would like to celebrate Morozko and Snegorochka as immortal spirits or request their help may do so tonight. They seek little but respect, but vodka and Russian treats will likely be greeted with favor. Morozko signals his presence via trees abruptly breaking beneath the weight of snow or

the sound of ice cracking.

YEMAYA

Today is a celebration of the orisha Yemaya, Queen of the Sea. This originated in Candomblé traditions of Bahia, Brazil, where her name is spelled Iemonja, but the practice has now spread around the world, especially in areas close to the sea. Devotees may also celebrate Yemaya at home or wherever they find themselves, but it's traditional to visit the orisha at her home, the sea. Altars may be dug out of damp sand and candles placed within and lit. Offerings such as white roses, scented soap, crystals, and wet, seedy fruits such as watermelons or pomegranates may be placed directly into the sea. Small offerings may be placed inside paper or wooden boats and sent out to sea together with lit white tealights. Write your petition or wish on paper and add it to the boat to send it directly to the Queen of the Sea. Use non-polluting items that will not further damage the sea and potentially anger Yemaya. The festival spills over into New Year's Day. Midnight—the threshold between December 31 and January 1, the old and new years—is Yemaya's moment of exceptional power.



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Appendix 1

Living by the Days

Each day of the week is infused with its own magic power that can be harnessed to serve you. As there's a new Monday every seven days, this is ideal for emergency magic—spells that require immediate action.

Each of the seven days is associated with one of the seven classical planets, whose influence permeates the energy of that day. For this reason, certain days are considered ideal for specific types of spells. Friday, the day of Venus, is considered best for love spells, for example. Each day of the week also has associations with specific sacred beings.

What follows is a list of the days of the week with recommendations for spells and spiritual interaction. This is a big, sprawling topic subject to overlap and debate deriving from lots of different traditions from around the globe. Families, regions, or even individuals may possess their own customs. Work with what resonates best for you. If Monday is your personal lucky day, then that's most important, regardless of what anyone else suggests.

In emergency situations, of course, cast spells as needed. But, given the choice, certain days provide better energy for some spells than others. It's the equivalent of swimming with the current. Suggestions are below, as well as lists of sacred beings associated with specific days.

Please note: While some religious or spiritual traditions have complex, detailed systems regarding which spirits or saints are associated with specific days of the week, others do not. For example, Papa Legba is associated with Mondays, Oshun with Fridays, and Saint Martha with Tuesdays. Those who wish to maintain or develop a relationship with them might make offerings on that day. Some saints and spirits are associated with multiple days. For example, different traditions venerate the Vodou spirit Simbi on different days. This is noted but does not mean that you must honor them on *all* the days, although you certainly can if you like. Choose one that resonates best for you. Some spirits also develop highly personal relations with devotees, and so your own system may evolve.

Of course, time is divided into units smaller than days. Each hour has a planetary ruler. Hermeticists and ceremonial magicians incorporate this into rituals, but other practitioners may not. The Chinese zodiac also calculates subdivisions of time. For example, there are hours and days of the dragon, as well as years. Tables of planetary hours are easily found online and in print.

Sunday

Sunday is the day of the sun, the optimum time for magic associated with issues under the sun's dominion including general well-being, happiness, prosperity, and protection.

Sunday is favored for divination, especially when one wishes to shine a light on a situation. Its energy is beneficial for creating amulets and talismans. Sunday is optimal for honoring or requesting assistance from solar spirits including Agni, Aine, Amaterasu, Apollo, Bastet, Helios, Kar, Lugh, Ra, Saulé, Sekhmet, Silibo, Sol Invictus, Sulis, and Sunna. The goddess Bendis is specifically associated with the winter sun.

Other saints and spirits who may or may not be solar are also associated with Sundays, as various traditions consider it the best time to invoke them, make offerings, or attempt communication. These include:

Babalu Ayé

Brigid, Saint

Florian, Saint

Joseph, Saint

Jude, Saint

Lazarus, Saint

Melek Taus, the Peacock Angel

Obatala

Rita, Saint

Sarasvati

Seraphim (fire angels)

Sidi Mimoun, King of Djinn

According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is red. Western esoteric traditions recommend the color spectrum ranging from yellow to amber, orange to gold. Working with botanicals associated with the sun is beneficial, including cedarwood, chamomile, cinnamon, daisies, dandelions, frankincense, heliotrope, oranges and other citrus fruits, saffron and other crocuses, Saint John's wort, sunflowers, and those flowers that open with the sun, only to close as it sets, such as morning glories. Today's metal is gold. Because of the sun's associations with fire, it's an excellent day for candle magic. Here is an example of a Sunday spell:

Candle Spell for Happiness, Prosperity, and Protection

This may be cast every Sunday or on the first Sunday of the month to encourage happiness and well-being, as well as to create a protective aura.

1. Create a solar oil blend by adding a couple drops of essential oil of cedarwood, frankincense, and orange to a base of sunflower and jojoba oils. The scent should be pleasing; adjust to your liking, substituting other solar fragrances, if desired.
2. Ideally, use a gold, orange, or yellow candle, but a white one can always substitute. Choose a size that will burn in one day.
3. Hold the candle in your hands, close your eyes, and focus on your needs and desires. Visualize your goals accomplished.
4. You may carve glyphs, sigils, symbols, and words into the candle, if so desired. If you'd like to dedicate it to a solar spirit, feel free.
5. Beginning at the middle of the candle and moving toward each end, rub the candle with the oil.
6. Burn the candle.

Monday

Monday is the moon's day and is ideal for lunar magic. Because the moon rules magic and witchcraft, the energy is excellent for any kind of spell. The moon rules divination and psychic abilities, which may be enhanced today. Creativity and fertility are ruled by the moon, literally and metaphorically. Monday is ideal for dream spells. Because Monday is widely considered the first working day of the week, many consider it favorable for financial, money, and prosperity spells.

Because of the close relationship between the moon and the sea, it's an excellent day for enchanted baths, too, or spells cast at the shore.

The moon is widely perceived as a benevolent deity, shining over all of us and lighting our way in the dark. A simple Monday spell involves addressing the moon directly: call her Madame Moon or Madame La Lune. Gaze at her and tell her what you seek. Dark moon Mondays are ideal for honoring and communicating with dark moon goddesses such as Athena, Hekate, Lilith, and Nephthys.

Lunar spirits include:

Amphitrite

Arianrhod

Artemis

Athena

Aynia

Bendis

Chandra

Coyolxauhqui

Diana

Hathor

Haumea

Hekate

Hina

Isis

Ix Chel

Jezanna

Khonsu

Lady Chang'O

Lilith

Pasiphae

Selene

Thoth

Monday is also traditionally the day to venerate the dead in general, and ancestors specifically. Attempts to communicate with the dead, appease them, or provide justice for them are appropriate today, as are necromantic rituals including séances and spirit boards.

While not necessarily "lunar," the following saints and spirits are associated

with Mondays, as various traditions consider this the best time to invoke them, make offerings, or attempt communication:

Anastacia

Anima Sola

Anne, Saint

Babalu Ayé

Brigitte, Madame (also Tuesday and Saturday)

Dymphna, Saint

Elegua (Papa Legba)

Filomena Lubana

Francis, Saint

Gedes, Haitian Vodou spirits of the dead (also Friday or Saturday)

Gerard Majella, Saint

Juno

The Marassa

Maria Padilha

Nana Buruku

Ochossi (depending on tradition may be Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday as well)

Olokun

Simbi (or Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, depending on tradition)

Tlazolteotl

Yemaya

Lunar plants include camelia, camphor, coconut, cucumber, jasmine, lettuce, lotus, melon, moonflowers and other night blooming plants, moonwort, mugwort, myrrh, oud, poppies, pumpkins, seaweeds, water lily, watercress, and willow. According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is yellow. Western traditions recommend burning white or silver candles to align yourself with lunar energy. Today's metal is silver.

Tuesday

Tuesday means Tyr's Day, and is named after the Norse spirit of justice and war. Tuesday is also the day of Mars. This is more apparent in other languages: Tuesday is *mardi* in French. Saints and spirits associated with Mars, such as Ares, Ogun, and Martin of Tours, are honored today.

Tuesday is excellent for aggressive action, whether for protection, justice, or banishing. It's optimum for overcoming your enemies, as well as *breaking* hexes, curses, and binding spells. (Saturday is optimum for casting them.)

If you fear that you've been cursed, an excellent hex-breaking spell involves squeezing lemons and limes into your bathwater (assuming that they will not irritate your skin) and adding nine bay leaves plus a handful of salt. Immerse yourself completely while bathing, if possible.

Jewish folklore considers Tuesday a lucky day, an excellent time to begin journeys or schedule medical procedures. In Yoruba traditions, Tuesday is the day of victory. According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is pink. Western magic recommends burning red candles to align yourself with Tuesday's energy. Today's metal is iron.

The following saints and spirits are among those honored and invoked on Tuesdays:

Anthony of Padua

Bossou

Expedite, Saint

Ezili Dantor

Ezili Freda Dahomey

Ganesha

Hanuman

Joan of Arc

Lucy, Saint

Martha, Saint

Maximon

Ogun

Oshumare

Peter, Saint

Tuesday's botanicals include allspice, cactus, chile peppers, dragon's blood, galangal, garlic, ginger, holly, horseradish, onions, peppermint, and wormwood.

Wednesday

The odd spelling of Wednesday, so frustrating to schoolchildren, is not so odd once one realizes that Wednesday is Woden's Day. Woden is the Germanic spelling of the name of the deity now more commonly called Odin. In Neil

Gaiman's novel, *American Gods*, Odin travels semi-incognito as Mr. Wednesday.

Wednesday is also the day of Mercury, associated with all things mercurial and mercantile. In French, Wednesday is *mercredi*. Woden/Odin was identified with Mercury in Germanic regions. Mercury himself was identified with Greek deity Hermes. Today is the day to honor all of them, as well as those saints associated with them, including Anthony of Padua and Expedite.

Wednesdays are ideal for money and glamour spells, as well as those for self-empowerment. A simple money spell is found in the entry for [January 4](#). It may be cast at any time. Wednesday is also a day for magicians, an excellent time to learn Hermetic or Ceremonial Magick, as well a day to lay down tricks. Wednesday is well suited for spells involving communication, as well as for working your will over others through inception-like methods, such as the skull candle spell found on [September 24](#). According to folklore of the British Isles, Wednesday is the luckiest day to get married. Some Yoruba traditions approach Wednesday with caution, as witches are believed to convene today.

Other sacred beings honored and associated with Wednesday include:

Aganyu

Agrat bat Mahalat

Anansi

Anubis

Castor and Pollux

Cosmos and Damian, Saints

Ganesha

Ochossi

Ogun

Shango

Today's metal is mercury or quicksilver. According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is green, while Western traditions recommend yellow, indigo, purple, and violet. The day's botanicals include almonds, anise, beans, celery, dill, fennel, fenugreek, lavender, lemongrass, parsley, pecans, pistachios, and southernwood.

Thursday

Thursday is Thor's Day, honoring the heroic thunder deity. It's also Jupiter's Day, more apparent in other languages, such as Italian where it's *giovedì*.

Today's energy is regal, royal, and generous.

Today is also an ideal time for consorting with fairies or devoting yourself to them. According to Joan of Arc's trial testimony, Thursday was the day for reveling with fairies, at least where she grew up. Italian witchcraft trial testimonies concur.

Sacred beings associated with Thursday also include:

Agasou

Agwé, Lord

Asaase Yaa: devotees refrain from planting or disturbing soil today

Damballah

Ezili Freda Dahomey

Hera

Kubera, Lord of Wealth

La Sirène

Logunedé

Nyai Loro Kidul, Queen of the South Seas

Perkunas

Oya

Papa Zaka

Rita, Saint

Sidi Chemharouch, King of Morocco's Djinn

Thor

Yemaya

Zeus

Today is recommended for spells for luck and success. Numerous spells exist to stimulate luck and encourage success. A very simple one involves pouring boiling water over fresh or dried spearmint, as if making a very large cup of mint tea. Once the liquid has cooled, strain out the plant material and add the liquid to your bathwater. Focus on your goals and desires as you bathe.

Yoruba tradition recommends Thursday as the best time to initiate long-haul projects, things or relationships that are expected to endure. Today is thus an excellent time to marry or create foundations for buildings and projects.

Thai folklore considers Thursday the most auspicious day for education and to begin learning something. Teachers are honored on Thursdays. Today's metal is tin, and it's an ideal time for ceromancy, a form of divination that involves melting tin ingots before plunging them into icy water and then interpreting the

resulting shapes.

According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is orange. Western magic associates Thursdays with purple, royal blue, mauve, and violet. Thursday's botanicals include anise, banyan, bodhi, ceiba, chestnuts, ginseng, nutmeg, the salvias, and walnuts.

Friday

Friday is Freya's Day, honoring the goddess of love, sex, witchcraft, and victory. Some associate Friday with another Norse goddess, Frigg. Friday is also the day of Venus. In French, Friday is *vendredi*, for example, while in Spanish, it's *viernes*. See [August 19](#) for more about Venus. See [October 21](#) for more about Freya. Friday is a day dedicated to love including self-love and so it is excellent for self-care rituals and for love spells. Because the day radiates Freya's energy, it's ideal for witchcraft and magic spells in general, and especially those for fertility and victory. Sacred beings associated with Fridays include:

Agnes, Saint

Aphrodite

Astarte

Frigga

Helena, Saint

Lakshmi

The Marassa

Maria Padilha

Mermaids

Morgan LeFay

Osain

Oshun

Pachamama

Paraskeva (Saint Friday)

Shango (or Wednesday or Saturday, depending on tradition)

Sidi Chemharouch, King of Morocco's Djinn

Venus

Yewá

Hindu goddess Santoshi Ma is also associated with Fridays. A ritual involves fasting on sixteen consecutive Fridays accompanied by prayer and invocations to

receive her blessings. Break the fast with white foods like yogurt. Should she fulfill your petition, honor her by serving a feast of sweets to eight young boys.

Today's metal is copper. According to Thai tradition, today's lucky color is blue, while in the Western magical traditions, Friday is associated with the green color spectrum. Friday's botanicals include apricots, flax, lilies, myrtle, primroses, raspberries, roses, spikenard, tulips, spearmint, vanilla, Venus flytrap, and vervain.

Because of its strong associations with magic, various spells and rituals are intended for Fridays.

- Sprinkle salt on your doorstep on the first Friday of any month to receive increased luck and protection.
- A romantic dream spell, enabling you to see the face of your true love and associated with Saint Luke's Eve, may be performed on any Friday night. Please see [October 17](#) for details.
- For improved gambling luck, burn white candles on Friday nights, dedicating them to Catherine of Alexandria. (See [November 25](#).)

Holly Leaves True Love Friday Dream Spell

This spell is specifically intended to be cast on Fridays.

1. From the moment you venture out in the evening to pick the holly leaves until you wake up in the morning and record your dreams, total silence must be maintained. Don't make a sound!
2. Pick nine holly leaves as the clock strikes midnight beginning Friday. They may be sharp—be careful.
3. Wrap them in a white handkerchief and place this beneath your pillow to incubate dreams of your true love.

Saturday

Saturday is Saturn's Day. More information about this deity is in the [December 17](#) entry. It's also Baron Samedi's day, as his name literally means "Baron Saturday." (See [November 2](#).) Another deity may also be in his power today, albeit secretly. Some wonder why, if the English names of the other six days of the week derive from the names of Norse deities, this day is different from the others. (Norse deities of the sun and moon are Sunna and Manni, respectively.)

Some claim it is possibly due to the disreputable nature of the deity it once referenced: Loki. An old Norse name for Saturday was *Laugardagr*, and Saturday in Norwegian remains *lørdag*. This is sometimes translated as “bath day” and may indicate ritual bathing traditions, but other scholars claim that it’s based on one of Loki’s names. Saturday may be Loki’s Day.

In Balkan folklore, those born on Saturdays are believed able to see and recognize vampires, even when they are invisible to others. Saturday is associated with Saturnian themes of boundaries, challenges, age, and experience, magic intended to exert authority and also to remove it. It’s a powerful day for spells rooted in anger. Saturday’s metal is lead, the primary material for Roman curse tablets (*defixionis*): small metal tablets inscribed with curses and then dropped into wells or sewers, so that the curses could not easily be undone.

Sacred beings associated with Saturday include:

Barbara, Saint

Baron Samedi (Baron Saturday) and La Grande Brigitte

Benedict, Saint

Ezili Dantor

Hanuman

Hekate

Melusine

Nana Buruku

Oba

Osain

Oshun

Saturn

Sedna

Sibilla

Sidi Mimoun, King of Djinn

Simbi

Yemaya

As with Wednesday, some Yoruba traditions are wary of Saturday, as it’s associated with witches. (But it’s a powerful and auspicious day for the witches.) It is, however, potentially a good time to prepare amulets and talismans.

Today’s colors include amber, black, brown, and indigo, as well as light blues and purples, such as mauve. According to Thai tradition, today’s lucky color is purple. Botanicals associated with Saturday include aconite, belladonna,

blackthorn, cannabis, cypress, datura, the nightshade family, hellebore, hemlock, hemp, ivy, patchouli, and tobacco.

Archangels of the Week

Seven days, seven archangels. Some spiritual systems associate each day of the week with a specific archangel. Here is a table of correspondences, but others exist with slight variations.

Sunday: Michael

Monday: Gabriel

Tuesday: Camael or Raphael

Wednesday: Raphael or Uriel

Thursday: Sachiel or Selaphiel

Friday: Anael or Jegudiel or Raguel

Saturday: Barachiel or Cassiel

On Saturdays, burn purple candles dedicated to Saint Cyprian (see [September 26](#)) to seek his protection against cheats, liars, and predatory people. On Saturday nights, burn white candles dedicated to Catherine of Alexandria for help with your studies and academic success and career (see [November 25](#)).



Appendix 2

Moveable Feasts

A fixed date is a date that does not change from year to year. Independence Day is always July 4: you can bank on it. Likewise, *Cinco de Mayo*, by definition, must occur on May 5. This is not true for all holidays, events, and celebrations, however. Moveable feasts are those whose dates vary from year to year, such as Thanksgiving, which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. What date is that, you ask? You'll have to check the calendar.

Numerous reasons why dates are moveable exist: they may coincide with natural or celestial phenomena, such as equinoxes and solstices, or they may derive from other calendar systems; Chinese New Year, for example, is a fixed date on the Chinese lunar calendar, but moves in the context of the Gregorian.

Equinoxes and Solstices

The two equinoxes and two solstices are the turning points of each year, reflecting Earth's rotation around the sun, the four points of the Wheel of the Year.

- The summer solstice is the longest day and shortest night of the year.
- The winter solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year.
- The equinoxes are halfway between the two solstices. Days and nights are of almost exactly equal length. Equinox literally means "equal night."
- When it is the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere, it is the winter solstice in the southern, and vice versa.
- The vernal or spring equinox in the southern hemisphere will be the autumnal equinox in the northern hemisphere, and vice versa.

Although the date varies from year to year, the solstices typically fall around

June 21 and December 21, coinciding with the start of the zodiac signs Cancer and Capricorn, while the equinoxes typically fall around March 21 and September 21, coinciding with the start of the zodiac signs Aries and Libra.

Because of Earth's tilt, this is more apparent and dramatic in some locations than in others. As discussed in this book's introduction, the solstices and equinoxes were observed and celebrated very early in human history—so early that's it's prehistory. Many festivals, such as Christmas, Passover, and Saint John's Eve, are timed to be near or coincide with solstices and equinoxes.

Sacred Beings Associated with the Equinoxes and Solstices

- Lilith, Mother of Witches, who, depending on tradition may be considered a vampire, goddess, demon, or some combination of the three, is associated with *all* solstices and equinoxes.
- Egypt's Lord Thoth has rulership over both annual equinoxes. A sacred scribe, he is portrayed standing beside the scales of the afterlife, observing the balance.
- The Holly King of Winter and the Oak King of Summer duel for sovereignty over the seasons in the British Isles. Some think their battles occur on the solstices, others on the equinoxes. Either way, when the Holly King wins, winter is coming; the reverse is true when the Oak King is victorious.

These four turning points of the year rank among the most magical days, suitable for virtually any kind of spellcasting. The veil between realms is sheer and spirits abound.

CROSS QUARTER DAYS: Please see the [Glossary entry](#).

THE VERNAL EQUINOX heralds the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere. Deities associated with the March equinox include Angitia, Ares, Attis, Kybele, Mars, and Ostara.

Collect rain that falls today, as it's believed to have profound magical powers. Adding it to your bathwater is believed to bestow a year of happiness and good fortune. Sprinkle it on magical tools, charm bags, and altars to increase their power. If not using it right away, label and refrigerate.

OSTARA, the Wiccan sabbat coinciding with the vernal equinox, is named for a Germanic goddess of spring, whose name is also spelled Astara, Easter, and

Eostre. Believed to mean “Radiant Dawn,” her name is etymologically related to words like estrum and estrus. Ostara heralds the arrival of spring and new life. Traditionally, new fires were lit at dawn, and she is celebrated with flowers, songs, and the ringing of bells. Ostara manifests as a beautiful young woman wearing a crown of the first spring flowers. Her emblem is the egg. Her sacred animal is the rabbit or hare. Modern Ostara celebrations reclaim Pagan aspects of Easter.

THE SUMMER SOLSTICE represents the triumph of the sun. It marks the longest day of the year with the most hours of sunlight. In the far north, those lands of the midnight sun, night may not visibly fall at all. However, immediately after today, darkness begins increasing, albeit in tiny increments. Fixed holidays associated with the summer solstice include Midsummer and the feast of John the Baptist. Solar deities are at maximum strength today. Sacred beings specifically associated with the summer solstice include Aine, Aynia, fairies, John the Baptist, Kupala, Marie Laveau, and Yemaya. Any of the spells and rituals described on [June 23](#) and [June 24](#) are appropriate for the summer solstice, too.

LITHA is the Wiccan sabbat that coincides with the summer solstice. The name is believed to derive from the ancient Germanic calendar and may reference the “summer season.” In addition to spiritual and religious activities, spells and rituals described on [June 23](#) and [June 24](#) are appropriate.

THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX signals the harvest in the northern hemisphere. Days become shorter, light diminishes, and the frost approaches. It is a time of life or death, safety or starvation. The season of ghosts and hunger approaches. This holiday encompasses paradoxes: it is a time of celebration and feasting but also a time of death. Some must die so others can survive. This applies to livestock but also to the plant world. As the old song says, “John Barleycorn must die.” Please see the last half of [September](#) and the beginning of [October](#) for rituals and spells that may once have been associated with this equinox.

Many consider this the ideal time to cut herbs for spell work. It’s also an excellent time to dry herbs already gathered. Some traditions insist that herbs gathered today must be picked after the morning dew has dried away. Otherwise, you’ll also be gathering the “devil’s breath.” It is also a day for crafting cornhusk dollies or working with poppets.

MABON (pronounced MAY-bon) is the Wiccan sabbat that coincides with the autumnal equinox and is named after a Celtic deity who appears in the Welsh

epic, *Culhwch and Olwen*. Born at the equinox, Mabon is kidnapped three days later, and held captive in the Otherworld. Mabon is the Child of Light, and his disappearance coincides with the waning light. King Arthur eventually rescues Mabon, liberating him at the winter solstice, thus allowing light to once again increase.

Among the most beloved Pagan holidays, Mabon is increasingly popular. It is a holiday of gratitude for blessings, friends, and family, as well as Earth's bounty. It is also increasingly dedicated to activism on behalf of Earth and natural resources.



THE WINTER SOLSTICE marks the longest night of the year. Darkness overtakes light. At far northern latitudes, there may be little or no light at all. However, after today, the light will begin increasing.

DONGZHI literally means “extreme of winter” or “maximum winter” in Chinese. The Dongzhi Festival is the Chinese name for the Winter Solstice Festival, popular throughout East Asia. Traditionally a family celebration, it's celebrated with rituals and special foods. For example, a tradition from the cold-weather regions of China recommends eating dumplings on the winter solstice for good luck.

MOTHERS NIGHT was, according to historian the Venerable Bede, the most important Pagan festival in eighth-century Britain. Eventually suppressed, very little information now survives. The holiday has had a resurgence among modern Pagans; however, different people celebrate at different times:

- It may coincide with the winter solstice.
- The Venerable Bede wrote that it coincided with Christmas Eve.
- Some celebrate Mothers Night at the new moon nearest the winter solstice.

The Mothers referenced in the holiday's name are believed to be a group of now mysterious goddesses venerated throughout Celtic and Germanic regions of Europe.

So little is known of these goddesses now that some focus their veneration on the feminine divine, sometimes treating it as a spiritual Mother's Day. We do

know that divination was traditionally practiced on Mothers Night. Dreams received tonight may be prophetic.

YULE names the modern Wiccan sabbat coinciding with the winter solstice, but it is also frequently intended to be synonymous with Christmas.

The name Yule (*Jul*) may refer to Odin, possibly the prototype of Santa Claus, or to the raucous, celebratory mood inherent in the season. Any of the Pagan traditions absorbed into Christmas may be celebrated now, too, as for example the Yule log, a protective device intended to safeguard the chimney, which is a threshold between the home and outer forces. It must burn constantly on this longest of nights.

Sacred Spirits of the Winter Solstice

HULDA is among the Queens of the Winter Solstice. Please see the entries for [January 5](#) and [6](#) for more information.

THE REINDEER MOTHER, a prehistoric and now mysterious goddess, may once have reigned over the North. She is associated with reindeer tracks that evolved into the first human paths, the winter solstice, shamanism, and *Amanita muscaria*. British goddess Elen of the Ways may be an avatar of the ancient Reindeer Mother.

SPIRITS OF LIGHT include solar deities but also Diana Lucifera, Juno Lucina, Lucifer, and Saint Lucy, whose feast day coincided with the winter solstice prior to calendar reforms.

Winer Solstice Mirror Divination

1. Position two mirrors so that they reflect each other as well as the light of two lit candles. (Depending on the type of mirrors used, it may be easier to position yourself relative to the mirrors.)
2. Sit or stand so that you can gaze into both mirrors.
3. This divination is traditionally intended to reveal the identity of your true love but may be used to reveal the answer to any question, providing your query is formulated before you begin. Keep whatever it is that you desire to know foremost in your mind.
4. Gaze deeply into the mirrors, counting the reflections. The seventh reflection reveals the answer.

Easter Season

While most Christian holidays have fixed dates, Easter is the big exception. Most Christian communities celebrate Easter on the Sunday that occurs either on or after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many Christian folk magic traditions consider it to be the single most powerful day of the year.

While Easter is the name of one specific event, it is also the culmination of an entire season of preceding holy days. As their dates are determined by Easter, they are also moveable feasts. Dates must be checked annually. The order of events is as follows:

CARNIVAL: the extended period leading up to Lent, culminating with Fat Tuesday. *Carnival* may derive from a Latin phrase translated as “farewell to the flesh.” Carnival is a bacchanalia, a time of excess and abandon. Many of its customs—parades, floats, processions, dancing, masking, public drunkenness—derive from rites of Dionysus. Other aspects may derive from the Roman festival of *Isidis Navigium* (The Vessel of Isis; see [March 5](#)). Carnival usually begins on January 6 and continues until Lent. Because Lent must begin on a Wednesday and last for forty days, Carnival’s length may be adjusted to accommodate.

FAT TUESDAY, also known as Mardi Gras, Pancake Tuesday, and Shrove Tuesday, is the final day of Carnival and the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. As its name indicates, it always falls on a Tuesday and is marked with Dionysian parades, processions, and dancing in the streets.

Shrovetide is another name for Carnival, and Shrove Tuesday is another name for its final day. The name derives from the verb “shrive” meaning “to absolve” or “to confess one’s sins.” Another name for the day is Pancake Tuesday, named for its characteristic meal. Other foods associated with Shrove Tuesday include omelets and doughnuts. Pancakes are also used for divinatory purposes. Those who keep poultry and can spare a pancake may avail themselves of an old Lincolnshire tradition: throw a pancake to a rooster. If he eats it all by himself, it’s a bad sign for the household. Take all appropriate means to stave off misfortune. However, if the rooster summons the hens to share, good fortune is indicated for all members of the household.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Ash Wednesday inaugurates the Lenten season. Its name derives from the ancient public penitential practice of wearing sackcloth and ashes.

LENT is the forty-day period of abstinence preceding Easter. Traditionally, those keeping Lent consume no meat, fats, eggs, or sweets, but may drink water and eat other things.

HOLY WEEK refers to the week preceding Easter Sunday and marks the final week of Lent. It commemorates the daily events of the life of Jesus leading to the crucifixion and resurrection. The days of this week are believed to be exceptionally magically powerful. Many folk traditions seek to exploit this energy for personal benefit, although this may be subversive and unauthorized. Wax from candles burned in churches was often thought to possess magical properties, particularly against the Evil Eye. Preserved, it was used to protect children and animals.

Although specific religious events are scheduled for each day of the week, our focus is on magical practices and the days featuring them: Palm Sunday, Green Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter. Holy Week is also widely considered a season of witches. For example, in the Philippines, witches reputedly converge on Siquijor Island in the Visayans for their annual festival.

PALM SUNDAY is the Sunday before Easter Sunday. Palm branches blessed in church today are treasured as protective amulets all year round, preserved until new ones are obtained at the following Palm Sunday. Blessed palm branches are also prized spell ingredients in Catholic folk magic and associated with African Diaspora spirits Ayizan and Shango.

- If hung from tree branches during droughts, they allegedly stimulate rain. They also allegedly stop rain: burning them is believed to calm turbulent storms, particularly if accompanied by petitions for help to Shango or Saint Barbara. (See [December 4](#).)
- Grind them up and blend with frankincense, myrrh, bay leaves, wormwood, crossroads dirt, and salt. The smoke produced when burned is believed to possess powers of purification and may banish malicious spirits.

GREEN THURSDAY, also known as Holy Thursday and Maundy Thursday, is the day when Easter witches begin their celebrations, which continue until Easter Eve. In Sweden, their destination is Blokula, a mysterious mountain peak, where witches reputedly congregate. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the witches of Siquijor, known as the Island of the Sorcerers, begin festivities tonight, the Eve of Good Friday, having spent the previous Holy Week days gathering botanicals, before converging on Mount San Antonio, the island's highest peak, to create

magical witches' brews and potions.

German folklore recommends eating green foods today, especially Green Thursday soup (*Gründonnerstagsuppe*), a vegetarian soup containing either seven or nine types of greens.

GOOD FRIDAY commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus and is traditionally a solemn day of grief and mourning. Christian folk belief suggests that it's also an excellent day for gardening, as the devil has no dominion today, especially for crops like parsley and potatoes, which possess underworld associations. The optimal time to concoct Good Thief Water is during the daytime today in order to coincide with the Crucifixion. (See [March 25](#).)

Gumbo Z'Herbes derives its name from an abbreviation of *gumbo aux herbes*, French for gumbo with herbs. A vegetarian version is a traditional Louisiana Good Friday dish. It's also believed to bring luck *if* created with precisely seven distinct types of greens. Alternative versions suggest seven ingredients total, while more relaxed variations suggest that as long as there are an odd number of greens, if eaten today, the soup still brings luck.

Hot Cross Buns are believed lucky if baked or eaten today and may also be dried and preserved as amulets. Folk belief suggests that Good Friday's Hot Cross Buns will never spoil. They are hung on walls and placed atop tall furniture to protect a home and its inhabitants.

HOLY SATURDAY, also known as Easter Eve, is traditionally a day of mourning, as it is the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection. On this day, Jesus lies in the tomb, believed dead. His mother is venerated as the Lady of Solitude (*Maria Soledad*) and this may be a name day for those named Soledad. Decorated Easter eggs are often prepared today. Baron Samedi is at the peak of his powers today. See the entry for [November 2](#) for more details.

EASTER commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is the holiest day of the Christian year. Regional Easter traditions vary greatly, especially as so many derive from local customs. Some Easter traditions such as bonfires and well-dressing may be limited to certain regions. Because of the perceived holiness of the day, it is considered exceptionally magically powerful and an ideal time for magic spells.

Easter Eggs

Eggs are among the primary folkloric symbols of Easter. Although they may also be on the menu today, "Easter Egg" traditionally refers to a decorated egg.

Decorations may be simple or elaborate. Whole boiled eggs may be dyed (with commercial food coloring or with onion skins, turmeric, and other natural items that impart color) and then eaten. But creating Easter eggs can be a laborious, painstaking process extending over days. Although many are begun on Green Thursday, the most labor intensive may be created earlier. The contents of an egg are removed (blown out) via a small hole without breaking or damaging the shell. Once dried, it's decorated, sometimes very intricately, and may then be preserved indefinitely, as a souvenir or amulet, depending on one's spiritual orientation.

Pysanky

Decorating eggs is an ancient Slavic custom, especially in the region known as the Ukraine, whose borders may not precisely match those of the modern nation of Ukraine. Various styles exist with their own individual names, but the best known are *pysanky*, associated with Easter. The inside of the egg is carefully removed via a tiny hole—the eggshell must be left undamaged and intact. Pysanky are traditionally not painted but inscribed with wax. The elaborate decorations may include ancient symbols and patterns. (Pysanky is plural; singular is *pysanka*.)

No mere eggs, Carpathian folk belief suggests that the fate of the world depends on pysanky. Creating pysanky is a sacred task. As long as pysanky are created, the world will survive, but should the tradition become extinct, so will we. A gigantic and eternal serpent, chained in the Otherworld, wishes to devour the world but is prevented by the presence of pysanky. Each year, the serpent sends emissaries to perform a pysanky census.

- If the number of pysanky has decreased since last year, the serpent's chains loosen, bringing the apocalypse closer.
- If pysanky have increased, the serpent's chains tighten, and we are safer.

Pysanky are given as gifts. They serve as protective amulets and as the equivalent of spirit traps. Low-level, malicious spirits can become trapped in their designs. An elaborate system of colors and symbols exists to maximize or specify the power associated with them. Tools used to create pysanky also develop blessed, talismanic properties.

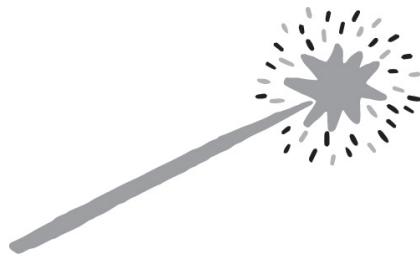
EASTER WATER or *Osterwasser* is regular water magically transformed by the power of the day. In parts of Germany, water drawn on Easter morning is believed to possess healing powers, especially for eye and skin ailments.

Allegedly, adding the water to baths taken during the daytime on Easter ensures a year without eye and skin issues.

This tradition varies depending on region. In some areas, “morning” means before daybreak, when it’s still dark. Young, unmarried women were typically sent to collect water from rivers, wells, and streams. From the moment she picks up the container to collect the water, she must remain completely silent, until it has been brought safely home and stored away, lest its power be lessened or broken. For those without access to natural sources of water, tap water will not suffice—there’s no silent journey—but obtaining gallons of spring water from a store may be worth experimenting with. Easter Water is believed to bestow beauty and romantic luck. Should the young woman who obtained the water sprinkle her sweetheart with it, their wedding will reputedly take place before next Easter. Easter Water may be used similarly to Holy Water.

A Bonus Moveable Feast

MIDYA: Midya, a modern holiday created by Clifford Brooks, author of *The Zen of Cat Walking: Leash Train Your Cat and Unleash Your Mind*, is a celebration of self, held on the final Wednesday in June. Midya is a day to focus on what is most significant to *you*. It is represented by three Midya candles: the first should be lit immediately upon rising. This candle represents the first six months of the year. Meditate on the previous six months. Light a second candle at midday to represent the present. Meditate on where you are right now. The third candle, lit in the evening, represents the next six months. Meditate on your goals and aspirations. In addition to the candles, Midya should be spent doing things that are important to you and that bring you joy.



A Glossary of Terms

The following terms used throughout this book may not be familiar to all readers. In order to make sure we are all on the same page, here is a brief glossary.

BLACK MADONNA: refers to mysterious and controversial votive images of divine feminine figures, both statues and painted icons. “Black Madonna” references the mysterious Shulamite of the biblical Song of Songs who is “black and comely.” While conventionally classified as portraits of Mary, Mother of Jesus, they are unconventional and do not conform to standard Marian imagery. Not all Black Madonnas are literally black, although many are. It is not solely their color that defines them. Many that were once black or brown have since been literally whitewashed by church authorities, yet they remain Black Madonnas.

These images tend to have mysterious provenances, discovered in caves, trees, wells, or buried underground, while some arrived on otherwise empty ships. Many are described as simply appearing, as if by teleportation. Sometimes they signal their hidden location by the appearance of strange lights or via dreams.

Because they are so mysterious, many theories exist as to who these images are intended to represent. While some insist that they are simply unconventional images of Mary, others theorize that at least some were originally images of Pagan goddesses, especially Isis. When Pagan religions were outlawed, these images were hidden or maintained in secrecy. Rediscovered centuries later by those no longer familiar with the older spiritual traditions, they were assumed to represent Mary, the Blessed Mother. Still others, particularly those who subscribe to theories expressed in books like Dan Brown’s bestselling *The Da Vinci Code*, believe that they may indicate devotion to another Mary: Mary Magdalene, rather than Mary, Mother of Jesus.

Regardless of who these images represent, many are reputed to be great miracle workers. Their dark complexions encourage syncretism, and so many are

used to portray African Diaspora spirits who also share their feast days. For example, the Haitian lwa Ezili Dantor is represented by the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, while the orisha Yemaya is represented by the Black Madonna of Regla. (*Lwa*, *orisha*, and *syncretism* are defined in this Glossary.)

CROSS QUARTER DAYS: Each year contains two solstices and two equinoxes. A cross quarter day is the midway point between an equinox and a solstice. Each year has four cross quarter days. These are celebrated as Wiccan sabbats but are also acknowledged as days of power by other spiritual and religious traditions.

- February 1: Candlemas or Imbolc
- May 1: Beltane, May Day, or Walpurgis
- August 1: Lammas or Lughnasadh
- November 1: All Saints Day or All Hallows Day

These holidays have become fixed dates on the calendar; however, these dates do not consistently align with precise astronomical calculations. Those seeking such astrological accuracy can determine the exact midpoint between an equinox and a solstice by consulting an astrologer, an astrological database, or an ephemeris.

EGYPTIAN DAYS: Since at least the fourth century CE, twenty-four days of the year—two per month—have been widely considered “unlucky days.” These are fixed dates; no explanation now exists as to *why* they are considered unlucky. They are known as “Egyptian days” because Egyptian astrologers were reputed to have identified these days, although whether this is true or whether associations with Egypt were believed to lend credibility is now unknown. Although the Egyptians did have intercalary days perceived as possessing uneasy energy, those were timed to the traditional Egyptian calendar.

The Egyptian days reputedly contain a dangerous undercurrent, and it’s recommended that risks be avoided, if possible. Initiating new projects or journeys is discouraged, as is surgery or any kind of bloodletting. Now, depending on your horoscope or other factors, these dates may, in fact, be lucky days for you. However, it does not hurt to exercise caution or incorporate protection magic to increase luck and safety. The Egyptian Days are as follows: January 1 and 25, February 4 and 26, March 1 and 28, April 10 and 20, May 3 and 25, June 10 and 16, July 13 and 22, August 1 and 30, September 3 and 21, October 3 and 22, November 5 and 28, and December 7 and 22.

EVE OF A FEAST: The eve of a feast occurs on the previous night and thus on a different calendar date. The most famous example is Halloween or All Hallows Eve, celebrated on October 31. “Hallow” is an archaic synonym for “saint,” and November 1 is All Saints Day, also known as the Feast of All Hallows. Technically, an “eve” begins at dusk and ends at midnight; however, actual practices tend to be looser and more flexible. Halloween is celebrated all day on October 31, for example, while Saint John’s Eve, one of the most magical nights of the year, typically begins in late afternoon and continues until the following sunrise.

Very frequently, the eve of a feast is considered especially magical. This is particularly true for those saints who exhibit a dual nature: pious and conventionally religious during the day but anarchic and magical at night. Prayers, spells, and rituals dedicated to a holy being may always be initiated on the night before their official feast. In some cases—such as with Saints Agnes, Andrew, or John the Baptist—unique rituals have evolved specifically for the eve of the feast.

FEAST: Some spirits and saints have specific dates dedicated to them. The technical term for these dates is “feast” whether or not any sort of lavish dining is incorporated. The word “feast” derives from the same etymological roots as “festival.” A saint is *feted* on their feast.

Not all cultures, religions, and spiritual traditions incorporate the notion of dedicated dates, but the Romans did, and this custom was absorbed by the early Church, which spread it around the world. These dates are not random. Even if no longer documented or recalled, there is some sort of basis for why specific dates were chosen. A saint’s feast typically marks the anniversary of their death, coinciding with their emergence as a saint, a power from beyond the grave.

You can venerate any holy being at any time and as needed. There is no need to wait for the feast day in case of emergencies, especially with a saint or spirit with whom you already have a relationship. However, the feast is a time when that holy being is at maximum power and especially receptive. The phone lines are open, and they are ready for business, essentially. It is also a date when you are potentially synchronizing your prayers and petitions with those of masses of other devotees.

HOLY WATER: “Holy water” is a frequent component of magic spells. Although many assume this to be exclusively church-blessed water, holy water can be any kind of water that is sacred to you or at least in magical contexts. The concept of holy water predates Christianity and was once a component of the rites of Isis, as

well as other deities. If the name “holy water” has negative associations for you, consider it “spiritually charged water” instead. Holy water is believed able to bestow blessings, healing, empowerment, and spiritual cleansing.

If the most sacred water in the world for you is that which flows from the taps of your grandmother’s home, then use that. *Think* about what constitutes *your* holy water. If you plan to consume it or bathe with it, make sure it’s safe to do so.

Religions may have very specific guidelines as to what constitutes holy water, but in a magical context, at least, you can create your own holy water. Pure spring water may be transformed into holy water by uttering sacred words, names of power, or prayers over it. Alternatively, leave spring water to rest overnight on an altar dedicated to a saint or spirit. Exposing spring water to moonlight, especially on magical nights such as Halloween, or during celestial phenomena like a solstice or an eclipse, may also charge the water with sacred properties. For example, British folk tradition considers rainwater gathered on Holy Thursday to be natural holy water. Rain falling and gathered on a feast day or its eve is believed able to transmit the blessings of that saint or spirit. Thus, rain falling on December 13 is believed beneficial for eye disorders, as it’s Saint Lucy’s Water and that’s her special power.

LWA: the lwa are the spirits of Haitian Vodou. *Lwa* is the Kreyol spelling. The same spelling is used to indicate both singular and plural. The word may also be spelled *loa*.

METRESA: refers to the feminine spirits of Dominican Vodou, which is also known as the 21 Divisions, referencing the groupings of spirits venerated by this spiritual tradition. It is a title of respect that is etymologically related to words like “master” or “mistress.”

NAME DAY AND NAME SAINT: Like dates, names are believed to possess powers of connection. Thus, it is traditional among many cultures to name a baby after an ancestor, saint, or other guardian. The name creates a bond that may oblige the holy being to protect the human (although it may be necessary to explicitly request protection and assistance). Sometimes babies are named for a family’s beloved saint or goddess, but often the name is determined by birth date.

The canon roll of saints is the Vatican’s official calendar of feast days. Only canonized saints appear on this calendar, not unofficial or folk saints or those saints who have been removed, for one reason or another, from the canon roll. In some nations with deep Catholic roots, only names that appear on the canon roll

are legal. People may call you something different in terms of nicknames or affectionate diminutives, but government birth certificates will only be issued to names from the canon roll.

If you share the name of a saint, then that saint is your name saint. Your name saint's feasts are your name days, even if not your birthday. In many parts of the world, name days are celebrated in addition to birthdays or even instead of them. Gifts and cards are given and parties held. This is true whether you are a Christian or not: the tradition has evolved into a secular one. Thus, for example, November 25 is a celebratory day for all who are named Catherine and its variants, as it's the feast of the very popular Catherine of Alexandria.

ORISHA: refers to the spirits deriving from Yorubaland, mainly located in what is now modern Nigeria. These spirits are the basis for African Diaspora traditions such as Candomblé, Lucumi, and Santería.

SAINT: With very few exceptions, saints are the deceased souls of previously living human beings. Having died, these individuals emerged as the powerful, generous dead, who continue to assist the living from beyond the grave. Where dates of birth and death are available and are at least fairly certain to be accurate, I have provided them. If dates are not provided, this does not mean that these saints did not live, only that it was impossible to determine those dates with accuracy.

Some saints, especially some early Christian saints, may actually be beloved but banished deities disguised as saints, so as to remain accessible to their devotees. These deities are described as “wearing the masks of saints.” This is controversial and does not make them less authentic as saints. If anything, it may make them more magically powerful, as these beings have passed into a liminal zone where they are simultaneously saints *and* spirits. Specifics are discussed where appropriate in the book. Other early saints may have had human incarnations, but facts are now shrouded by time, as well as layers of legend and hagiography.

SPELL: a magic spell is a conscious harnessing of magical energy in order to accomplish a goal. Magical energy, known by different names in different languages, exists independently. Each and every magic spell, however, is a human creation. The oldest spells have been adapted and tweaked endlessly. Please feel free to tweak them further so that they best suit your own needs, or let the spells offered here inspire you to create your own.

Some practical spellcasting tips:

- Before you begin, articulate your spell's goal in words that accurately express your hopes and desires. Do not be vague. The more specific you are, the more likely your spell is to work.
- The most dangerous thing about a spell is that they very frequently work: you may get what you seek, so be sure it's what you want.
- Incorporate words that clearly and accurately express your desires and that you comprehend. Simple, heartfelt words are preferable to glamorous but incomprehensible terminology.
- Spells and affirmations are always articulated in the present tense, not the future, which keeps your happiness perpetually out of reach. In other words, when casting a healing spell, one would say "I am healthy!" not "I will be healthy," even though clearly if all was well, you might not be casting that particular spell. This is not always easy to do; however, it ultimately creates a mindset conducive to successful spellcasting and to taking control of your destiny.
- When you cast a spell, visualize its success. In other words, when creating a magical candle, for example, hold it in your hands and "see" your spell come true. See yourself or your situation as it should be rather than as it presently is. Hold that vision in your mind before releasing it into the atmosphere and lighting your candle (or continuing with another aspect of your spell).
- Spellcasting rewards the persistent, not the passive. If a spell doesn't work (or not as you desire), cast it again or find another. It is your deepest, most determined will that drives the spell.
- The one ingredient of a spell that can never be replaced is *you*: your hopes, fears, and desires. In Hoodoo terminology, spellcasting is known as "working," and the process, while frequently fun, is also simultaneously work. When casting spells, especially those you *need*, if you don't feel tired at the end, then perhaps you haven't put enough of yourself in them.
- Spellcasting is an ancient art and not suitable for modern multitasking. Give it your full attention.

SYNCHRONICITY: The word "synchronicity" was coined by Carl Jung, the pioneering Swiss mystic and psychoanalyst. He described synchronicity as "meaningful coincidence" and theorized that specific moments in time possessed unique and significant qualities. *Anything occurring at a fixed moment shares in*

the essence of that moment.

SYNCRETISM is an esoteric concept describing situations where, for varying reasons, one spirit assumes the identity or dons the mask of another. Typically, this is the result of desperation, occurring when a beloved deity is forbidden to devotees and another, new one is imposed. Syncretism becomes more convoluted and complex with time, and so the most obvious cases are the most recent.

Should you venture to a spiritual supply store seeking an image of the handsome, virile, male Yoruba orisha Shango, you may very well be handed an image of a petite white girl holding a tower. No mistake has been made. Shango has become syncretized to Saint Barbara, and so her image and even sometimes her name may be used to represent him. When enslaved Africans were brought to the Western Hemisphere, they were forbidden to venerate their own deities, but were given holy cards of Catholic saints instead. The key to syncretism is that when different people gaze at an image, you cannot assume that they will all see the same thing. The link between Shango and Barbara is the lightning associated with both. Another example, Saint Patrick is almost always depicted together with the snakes he is said to have banished from Ireland. However, when natives of Dahomey, enslaved and transported to what is now Haiti, saw that image, what resonated for them were the snakes: the image was interpreted as representing the great serpent deity Damballah.

As part of assuming another sacred being's identity, once-forbidden spirits share their feast days. Once upon a time, devotees would surreptitiously pay tribute to banished spirits during these feasts.

VEIL BETWEEN THE WORLDS is a term used to describe the barrier between the realms of the living, the dead, and the spirits. Although those with knowledge of shamanic techniques may be able to pass through the veil readily at any time, the veil becomes sheer and easily permeable for everyone during specific times or dates during the year, as, for example, during the month of October. This veil is permeable from all sides, and thus denizens from other realms may also reach out to us during these times. Those with heightened extrasensory perceptions, like clairaudience or clairsentience, may find themselves bombarded.

THE WILD HUNT is the name given to a cavalcade of reveling, marauding spirits who ride on windy, stormy nights, as well as on specific dates throughout the year, especially May Eve, Midsummer's Eve, and Halloween. They are particularly active during the chilly winter months, especially Yuletide. The

leader of the Wild Hunt is known as the Wild Hunter. Odin is the most frequent Wild Hunter. Other leaders or co-leaders include goddesses like Hulda and Berchta and occasionally even saints, such as Saint Lucy (who may or may not be syncretized to Norse goddess Freya). These spirits are accompanied by souls of the dead, revisiting their old stomping grounds. The Wild Hunt may be welcomed by witches and other practitioners of magic who seek contact.

The dates when the Hunt is particularly active are referenced within this book, and tips, both for protection and celebration, are included.



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* This healing formula must not be consumed, as it is potentially poisonous. It may not be suitable for households with children or animals.

* Note: Those who are pregnant or actively attempting to become so should avoid contact with rue. Leave it out and only use fennel.

* This is an old spell and reflects the belief that only a woman would cast it and that she would wear a dress. The spell is sometimes called the Turning of the Smock—if only because “smock” is a forced rhyme with “Mark.” Anyone of any gender can effectively cast this spell. Those who do not customarily wear dresses may substitute a shirt or robe.

* The recipe calls for “baking spice,” which is an unfamiliar term for many Americans. This refers to a British spice blend, also sometimes called “mixed spice,” which typically includes allspice, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves. However, each manufacturer’s blend may vary slightly. It is readily available in the US (and typically inexpensive) from purveyors of spices. If you prefer, create your own spice blend to suit your taste. Just maintain the combined total measurement of two teaspoons.

* This recipe calls for egg yolks only. What will you do with the whites? Well, anything you choose—you can save them to make an omelet or meringue, but they can also be used for a seasonal household divination. Please see [November 3](#) for instructions.

* Until the twentieth century, ritual participants likely wore long skirts, which increased the likelihood of putting out the flame, as well as the danger of catching fire. Consider all aspects if planning this ritual.

* You can grind almonds yourself with a mortar and pestle. One-quarter cup is *approximately* twenty-five almonds. Focus on your goal while grinding, even if only honoring Catherine or pleasing those for whom you bake. If making a request from Catherine, keep it in mind while grinding.